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SERMONS

MORAL AND DOGMATIC

ON THE

Fifteen Mysteries of

THE HOLY ROSARY.

BY

REV. MATTH. JOS. FRINGS.

TRANSLATED BY J. R. ROBINSON.

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PREFACE.

LAST year the author of the following sermons presented to the public a series of instructions on the Holy Rosary, in which he endeavored to treat of that devotion in an intelligible manner, and teach its practical use according to the spirit of the Church.

In the present series he has treated of the several Mysteries, and made each the subject of a sermon. He has done this according to a definite plan or system, which was clearly the basis of their original arrangement: that is, the Joyful Mysteries are found to contain the foundation work of our redemption; the Sorrowful, the execution of that work; and the Glorious, the blessed fruits thereof. Upon this plan the sermons are arranged.

They are therefore designed to explain the contents of the Rosary itself, and form a complement to the series first mentioned. They are, at the same time, believed to be complete in themselves.

That this little volume may contribute to a better understanding of the holy Rosary, and to its more

general use as a form of prayer, is the author's earnest wish. May the glorious Queen of the holy Rosary implore Heaven's gracious blessing in abundant measure on it, and all who read it.

FEAST OF THE NATIVITY OF THE
BLESSED VIRGIN MARY, 1885.

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"To arms! my children, I invite you to battle with the evils in the Church and society; not however, with the sword, but with prayer and good example."

Pius IX.

THE

MYSTERIES OF THE ROSARY.

Introductory Sermon.

"Blessed is the man . . . who shall meditate upon the law of the Lord day and night. He shall be like a tree which is planted near the running waters, which shall bring forth its fruit in due season."—*Ps.* i. 1–3.

Beloved in Christ the Lord:

I propose to explain the mysteries of the Rosary of the Blessed Virgin in a series of sermons, fifteen in all. And it shall be my endeavor to do this in a simple and intelligible manner, to the end that we all may be able to meditate upon these mysteries more fruitfully, and use this holy devotion with greater zeal and profit. The sermon of to-day shall serve as an introduction.

For more than six hundred years has the Rosary proved to be a most powerful means of obtaining help from the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of God; help for the Church in days of trial and affliction, help for the Christian family in calamity, and for the individual soul in need. Furthermore, to villages, towns, and countries have many blessings come through this form of prayer, in reviving the religious and moral life, in sustaining and perfecting the same.

In view of these facts, Popes Pius IX. and Leo XIII. have stated their conviction that, in our own pressing needs at this day, like blessings could be looked for from the earnest and intelligent use of the Rosary. For as in former ages, so now is there grievous and widespread affliction; tribulation fallen upon individuals and upon whole nations; and the Christian life seems wholly to have faded from some parts of the earth.

Pius IX. took every opportunity of admonishing the faithful to use this means in striving to overcome the evils of our time. And the now happily reigning Pope Leo XIII. has given to the month of October the name of "Rosary month:" for during the past three years he has summoned all Christendom to observe that month by use of this devotion in besieging Heaven with prayers for help in due season. Also he has ordained that the Blessed Virgin shall be invoked in the Litany of Loreto under the title of "Queen of the most holy Rosary." And as in former ages it was the custom for the Christian family in common to say "the beads" each day, so now again would the holy Father wish this habit to prevail, and has recommended that the Rosary become a daily exercise for all the faithful.

Whoever has a proper knowledge of this holy devotion will certainly appreciate it, and will welcome every opportunity for its use. And it is my hope that these sermons may be the means under God of inducing many to say the holy Rosary each day, praying for the welfare of Church and State, of their fellow-men and of their own souls.

Of this day's sermon I shall devote the first part to pointing out the excellence of this method of prayer

from the nature of its form and words. In the second, I shall show how well adapted is the Rosary as a fruitful exercise for men of every class and condition.

I.

By its form and words the Rosary testifies to its own excellence, aye, to its perfection, as a method of prayer. We term that prayer a perfect one wherein oral and mental prayers are suitably combined. This is evident when we consider what all prayer really should be—viz., a conversation between man and God; a discourse, wherein we not only speak to God, but God speaks to us. It is but right, when God in any way speaks to us, that we, in humble attitude, should hearken to His voice, should lay well to heart that which He says, and order our ways in keeping therewith. Thus does God speak to us when we meditate upon a religious or moral subject, or when we listen to a sermon or read a pious book. This is mental prayer. In oral prayer we speak to God, we praise Him and adore Him, we ask for blessings and return Him thanks, we beg of Him forgiveness, promise amendment, vow fidelity and love. Therefore when we combine the two, mental with oral prayer, we have it in perfection. Oral prayer alone, without meditation is but a soulless life-service, without power or efficacy, and unworthy of being heard. Hence when we make the very briefest of our prayers, the "sign of the Cross," the "Hail Mary," "Glory be to the Father," etc., we should, at the same time, raise heart and spirit unto God, and send our thoughts where we would send our words.

In the Rosary, both oral prayer and mental are

combined, and for him who uses it with holy diligence it is a model prayer. Therefore, whenever we say this prayer, we should at least at the end of each decade reflect upon the corresponding mystery. This keeps our thoughts from wandering, and is of obligation to him who wishes to gain the indulgences attached. But he who says the Rosary alone, and has the time at his disposal, should devote a little while to meditation on each mystery, should make good resolutions, and then say the "Our Father" and the ten "Hail Marys" for grace and strength to carry out the same.

This, my brethren, is the proper way to say this prayer; and said in this way it becomes a certain means of gaining grace to awaken, strengthen, and sustain the spiritual life.

Whoever carefully considers these holy mysteries, their order and arrangement, will see their excellence as subjects for pious meditation. For they show us at a glance the Life, the Passion and Death, and the glorification of our Divine Redeemer and His holy Mother. Yes, the entire work of redemption is comprised in this brief sketch.

The Joyful Mysteries contain the foundation, the Sorrowful the accomplishing, and the Glorious the perfecting, of the work of our salvation. Let us then take a nearer view of these mysteries, that we may properly realize their meaning and their beautiful connection.

The five Joyful Mysteries consist of five events in the early life of Jesus through which Our Blessed Lord has laid the foundation of the work of redemption. By the Incarnation of the Son of God and of the Virgin Mary has our Divine Redeemer entered into the world. By the sanctification of His herald, and

by the grace that Mary's visitation brought to Zachary and Elizabeth, has Jesus manifested the object of the Incarnation. The Son of God has become the Son of man, that the sons of men might become the sons of God, and might receive all graces that they need to live as beseems the children of their heavenly Father. In His Nativity Our Saviour has given an example to us men, teaching us the true estimation of earthly luxuries, teaching us to renounce the world and the spirit of the world if we would live as children of God. At the Presentation in the Temple, He tells us that we, too, must present ourselves to God, and as His faithful children, yield our lives a willing service unto Him. By remaining in the Temple where Mary and Joseph find Him, Jesus Christ has indicated that we shall find Him in His Church, as Prophet, Priest, and King; for of His Church the Temple was a type. In this way is the foundation of redemption outlined in the Joyful Mysteries of the holy Rosary.

The five Sorrowful Mysteries tell us of the accomplishment of His redeeming work through Our Saviour's Passion and Death.

By his Agony in the Garden does our Divine Redeemer contemplate the sins of all the world and the punishment incurred thereby. On His own shoulders He takes these sins, and their grievous burden brings a sweat of blood from Him. By His Scourging at the pillar He does penance for our sins, especially the sins of the flesh, as by His Crowning with thorns He does for sins of the spirit. At last He allows Himself to be condemned to death upon the Cross; and, carrying His Cross to the place of execution, thereon He is crucified. Thus the work of redemption is accomplished. And these five mysteries will also show us

our way of obtaining a share in this redemption, will show us what we must do to be redeemed from sin and its penalty.

First we must bring well to mind our sins, their guilt and culpability ; and the contemplation of them must produce in us heart-felt sorrow and contrition. In this mind we must confess them unto God, and to His representative, and thus approach the holy Sacrament of Penance. Then must we make some satisfaction for our sins, and strive to curb our sinful tendencies by discipline and mortification of the flesh, and by obedience and humility of spirit. And this discipline must continue throughout life ; our cross must be borne by us each day. In this way must we strive to die to sin and to the world ; and when death comes to us at last, resignedly accept it, commending our spirit with loving confidence into the hands of our heavenly Father. These are the steps by which we must follow the way to our redemption from sin and all its evil consequences. Our Blessed Saviour has gained for us the grace to walk this path and find salvation at the journey's end.

The five Glorious Mysteries contain the happy fruits of our redemption. The first of these is the awakening of the soul to the life of grace, to filial servitude to God, and the resurrection of the body from a state of death to a blissful life with the soul in all eternity. The second is our heavenly home which Christ has opened unto us by His Ascension. From thence he sends the Holy Ghost, the dispenser of all gifts and blessings, unto us. The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin into heaven, shows us that her faithful cooperation with the Holy Ghost has gained for her the greatest holiness and righteousness possible to a

creature. And her coronation shows us how the Holy Ghost has exalted her in heaven to the height of blessedness and glory. These glorious fruits, my brethren, are all within our reach, and the more we partake of them, the more we co-operate with grace, and so much the more shall we resemble Mary in holiness and righteousness here on earth, and in eternal bliss and glory hereafter. Thus in these five Glorious Mysteries do we find the blessed fruits of the work of our redemption.

Even from this brief survey of the Rosary, who will deny the exceeding beauty of these holy mysteries, and their fruitfulness as meditations for pious Christians? Whoever, in the course of his devotions, each day says a third part of the Rosary, and even briefly contemplates its mysteries twice every week, recalls Christ's holiest teachings and gains a deeper knowledge of religion. Faith, hope, and love then cannot slumber, but must awaken and be active; indeed the strongest impulse will thus be given for the practice of every Christian virtue.

The oral prayers accompanying these mysteries are the holiest and most powerful that the Church possesses. They are: the "sign of the Cross," "Our Father," "Hail Mary," "Apostles' Creed," and "Glory be to the Father." The Rosary proper commences with the contemplation of the First Mystery; but to pray for an increase of the three divine virtues is a most excellent preparation; and for this the most suitable prayers are: the "sign of the Cross," "Glory be to the Father," "Creed," and three "Hail Marys."

Baptized in the name of the Triune God, as children of the Triune God we pray. And as all blessings for which we pray proceed from the Cross, therefore

do we begin all prayers with that holy emblem, the "sign of the Cross;" for this reminds us of the holy Trinity, of the Cross, and of the Crucified One. The very groundwork of all prayer is faith, its very life and energy; therefore the "Creed" finds here a proper place. Faith, hope, and love are the foundation, the building, and the perfecting of the Christian life. And in proportion as these virtues gain strength within us, so, too, does the spiritual life grow, and so do we go forward on our way to holiness. How excellent it is, in this place, to pray for an increase of these three divine virtues! By this the preparation is completed. The first one of the mysteries is now brought to mind, and a thoughtful view is given to the holy picture; a good resolve will follow this, and then the prayers "Our Father" and ten "Hail Marys" for strength to carry out our resolution. And thus with each succeeding mystery of the Rosary. No prayer so suitable as the "Hail Mary" could well be found to fill this place, it stands in close connection with the mysteries, and by its brevity and simplicity allows the mind full meditation thereon. Its tenfold repetition secures a thorough contemplation of the mystery, induces the mind to well digest the pious thoughts aroused, and inclines the will to hearken to the constant call of love. And so it is that we find united the most holy subjects of meditation with the Church's potent prayers; and therefore is the Rosary a devotion of the highest excellence—a very masterpiece of prayer. By its own intrinsic merits, by its forms and words, it attests its excellence, and at the same time it commends itself to all. And briefly as to this in the second part.

II.

The holy Rosary commends itself as a method of prayer appropriate for men of every condition. It is obligatory on us all to pray, and to contemplate the truths of salvation. No thinking man can doubt this, for prayer is natural to man; it is his dignity and bliss. To praise God, to adore Him, to communicate with God, to depend on Him for blessings that we have, is the first, the highest duty of mankind. By humble prayer has God ordained that we shall gain His grace, His blessings, which we cannot otherwise obtain. By prayer we can obtain the strength for combat with temptation, and grace to save relapse into sin. And after we have fallen, prayer is needed to help us to rise, and at every step in our progress to perfection. For our worldly welfare, also, and our temporal affairs, prayer is of prime importance for obtaining God's blessing. Therefore, as we at all times need the grace and help of God, so we must at all times pray, and, as Christ has warned us, "pray *without ceasing*."

Without prayer there is no grace, no spiritual life, no virtue, no blessing from on high. As water is needful for life to the fish, so is prayer for life to the soul. As the plant without moisture would wither and die, so the spiritual life without prayer. What a soldier is in battle without arms, that a man is on earth without prayer. For of all true religion, the essence is faith, love, and prayer. As man is created for religion, so is it intended he should pray. And this applies to all men. To the wealthy, the aristocrat, and those of high estate, to the learned and the

student, prayer is even more necessary than to men of humble life; for the former are open to more grievous temptations, besides having graver duties to discharge. And as we have found the Rosary, by its form and contents, to be a most perfect method of prayer, so shall we find it suitable for all classes and conditions of men. The holy mysteries are in truth so simple and their teaching so intelligible that the humblest intellect can readily receive them; yet these truths are, at the same time, so profound, that to the mind capable of penetrating the deep mysteries of our faith there is offered abundance of matter for meditation and a rich repast of spiritual food.

For invocation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and for venerating her, the Rosary supplies the ablest means. These honors are due unto our Blessed Lady, and every Christian is morally obliged to pay them. The invocation of Mary rests upon a different footing from the invocation and veneration of the saints. Holy Church teaches us that the latter is useful and wholesome, although not of obligation. But according to the holy Fathers and the universal teaching of the Doctors and pious scholars of the Church, the intercession of God's holy Mother is needful to obtain eternal bliss. To this the saints with one voice agree. St. Bernard has the following words thereon: "From the moment when the Virgin conceived in her womb the Word, she received, as it were, a jurisdiction of the Holy Ghost over the treasures of grace; thus can no creature receive mercy from God except through the intervention of the holy Mother."

In these words has St. Bernard declared the belief of the holy Fathers that a true devotion to the Blessed Virgin is a certain sign of election, and a want of

that devotion a mark of condemnation. Wherefore St. Bernard addresses this admonition to us all: "Let us then venerate Mary and call upon her with all zeal of devotion, as God's will is that all our needed blessings should come to us through her."

This wholesome admonition, my beloved, is intended not for a few, but for all men—for the faithful of every condition and estate. Therefore no true Catholic will refuse to use his Rosary, as though it were not fitting for him. Its holy mysteries of the life of our Divine Redeemer are also mysteries of Mary, for she is ever associated with her Blessed Son. They speak to us of all the great things God has done for her; and they tell us what she has done for God. They contain the very treasures of her grace here on earth, her wealth of virtue, too, and the glories prepared for her in heaven. Of all her blessed privileges do these mysteries remind us, and of the veneration which is her rightful due. And when with reverence we think on this and say "Hail Mary" with these thoughts in mind, by that Angelic Salutation we pay to her right worthy veneration. And ten times repeating this, ten times do we send to her the persevering call of a loving heart, the earnest supplication for her powerful intercession, "now and at the hour of death."

With this understanding of the holy Rosary, every one must acknowledge it the ablest means of invoking Our Blessed Lady, and of paying her the honor which she merits. And he who daily says this holy prayer and dwells in meditation on its mysteries keeps himself in daily intercourse with Jesus and with Mary. He goes with them in spirit through their life, he sees them in the practice of their virtues,

and finds himself drawn by a powerful attraction to live in imitation of them. Thus with proper zeal and perseverance will he obtain the grace to live a pious Christian life and die a Christian death. What greater blessing can be had on earth?

The Christians of the early ages have borne this well in mind, and have used these holy practices, indeed with greater diligence than those of later centuries. The holy Rosary, too, has found its way to all classes of society, and to men of every grade. Princes and peasants, learned and ignorant, famous statesmen, gallant generals, noted artists of every kind, parents, children, aye, every Christian family, made daily use of this holy prayer.

The annual records of the Sodality of the Rosary tell us of twenty-seven Popes who have richly endowed this blessed devotion with indulgences. They likewise tell us of the many holy Bishops who daily said the Rosary although overburdened with weighty cares in the discharge of their duties. Among them we may find the names of St. Charles Borromeo, St. Francis of Sales, St. Alphonsus Liguori, and others. As members of this society are also found the names of many royal personages, kings and queens, princes and princesses, of Italy, Spain, Portugal, France, Poland, Bohemia, and Germany. And in the daily order for the young princes of Austria and Bavaria there was a special time appointed for saying the Rosary, and for their instructors, joining with them in the prayer.

Prince Eugene of Savoy, the conqueror of the Turks, and Radetzky, the victorious general, wore their beads with their swords, and made a practice of saying the Rosary before engaging in battle. Joseph

Haydn was most constant in the use of this devotion; and Glück, the famous composer, called the Rosary the "musician's breviary."

Thus do we find men of all races, ages, classes, and ranks of life devoted to the saying of the holy Rosary.

That once again it may become the universal practice of all Christians is our earnest prayer; that, as a daily call, its voice may rise to heaven and gain a great outpouring of God's grace for us, to heal the grievous evils of our day, to nourish and sustain the Christian life, to secure welfare both of Church and State, of Christian families and individuals. Amen.

SERMON I.

The First Joyful Mystery.

THE ANGEL GABRIEL DECLARES UNTO THE BLESSED VIRGIN THE INCARNATION OF OUR BLESSED LORD AND SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST.

"And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us."—ST. JOHN i. 14.

Beloved in Christ the Lord:

In my introductory discourse I promised you a series of sermons on the Mysteries of the holy Rosary, and that I would endeavor to present them in a manner plain and intelligible to all. To-day I shall give you the first of these sermons.

You will remember that the Fifteen Mysteries of the Rosary are divided into three parts of five each, called "the Joyful," "the Sorrowful," and the "Glorious Mysteries."

The first part contains the Joyful Mysteries; that is to say, the events we dwell upon therein were scenes of great joy in the life of the Blessed Virgin, and therefore joyful for every Christian believer. As I have said, they contain the foundation of the work of redemption. Upon them rests the world's salvation, all grace, all blessings, and everything that tends to man's true happiness. Thus do they form the very roots whence springs every Christian joy. The first one of these Joyful Mysteries, the Incarnation of God the Son, shall be the subject of this day's sermon.

This wondrous event, dear brethren, the Incarna-

tion of God, is the fundamental condition of the redemption of man. The doctrine that the Son of God has become man is the basis of Christianity, the very foundation of all Christian teaching. Therefore is faith in this wondrous truth the first condition of our salvation.

From the first man, Adam, we have received our material body, and with it, alas! the sorrowful taint of sin, inheritance of death and lasting misery. What profit, then, for us to have been born, had we not been redeemed and born again unto a life of grace and salvation? The second Adam, Jesus Christ, has become our second spiritual Father. He has saved us from the grievous evils inherited from the first Adam. He has again brought heaven within man's reach, which had been else forever forfeited. He has re-established the ruined race of man. Belief in the glorious Mystery of the Incarnation is therefore of the first importance to us all. Try then, to-day, beloved, to give your whole attention to our sermon.

Only a Mediator who at once was God and man could effect our redemption. This shall be considered in our first part; and in the second, that God the Son became man, being conceived by the Holy Ghost and born of the Virgin Mary. I continue in the name of Jesus and His glorious Virgin Mother.

I.

Only the Incarnation of God the Son could redeem the human race fallen through Adam's sin, and restore the heavenly blessings it had lost.

This will be better understood by us if we consider

well the state into which sin brought our race and compare it with its state as first created. God made man after His own image, an immortal spirit. He gifted him with reason and free will. By nature is the soul of man an image, a natural image, of God. And this belongs to the essence of man's nature. Indeed, through just this it is that he is man. Therefore this image cannot be effaced or lost; no, not even through sin. Had Almighty God then left him in his natural existence, man had been only a creature for this world. But God designed him for eternal bliss and heavenly glory, intended him to share His glory in heaven. Accordingly He also gave to man His supernatural image. He imparted supernatural gifts and blessings unto him, and entitled him thereby to the worthy possession and enjoyment of heavenly life. God imparted unto him sanctifying grace, and this made man participate in God's divine nature, made him holy, just, raised him unto the heavenly estate, made him a child of God, and full inheritor of the kingdom of heaven. In this way constituted, the first man was placed by God in a very paradise of bliss, and of all visible creation made the king and lord. The garden of Eden afforded happiness and sweet content unto our first parents, a region of blessed peace with themselves, with God, and with surrounding nature; body and soul were in full harmony and true accord. No strife arose between the flesh and spirit; but the body's pleasure was to obey the spirit's will, and the spirit rejoiced in obedience unto God. As tenderly as parents love their children, so Almighty God loved the first men in their innocence, and they, with a child's affection for his father, loved their God. All

nature, aye, all visible creation, acknowledged man as king and master, and willingly submitted to his loving sway. The garden of Eden freely yielded what was needed for support, and offered noble and holy gratifications. Our first parents knew no tribulation, pain, or illness; therefore their condition and estate was called paradise: and yet their life in Eden was but a shadow of heaven's eternal glory, and to this they would have succeeded after a time, without tasting of death. All these possessions and glorious gifts which reflected the supernatural image of God did not, however, belong to man by nature. They were in truth the free gifts of divine Love, which men should obtain for themselves by willing obedience to God and faithful dependence on Him. But they, too, could be lost by disobedience and revolt. We know that Adam and Eve essayed to please themselves, and displeased God by breaking His command. Thereby they wilfully departed from obedience unto God, and by their sin brought woful consequences on their race. For in Adam was all mankind enclosed, just as the seed contains the future plant; and as we lived in him, so in him have all his descendants sinned, inherited a birth of sin, its evils and its punishments. And the grievous loss incurred by Adam through his fall extended unto his posterity. A ruin fell on all the human race. The supernatural image of God was lost to man; the grace of God, the right to be called His children, the friendship of God, and the inheritance of the kingdom of heaven, were all forfeited. The natural image of God, wherein man had been originally created, was not lost, but sadly was it marred. The light of reason became darkened, and the will power was enfeebled.

At once there grew up strife between the spirit and the flesh, and evil lusts arose: and these have made man's life a continual warfare, and have occasioned him unnumbered sins. The body lost its immortality, and found instead a bitter death. Pains and diseases of all kinds fell upon it, and sorrows and afflictions as the harbingers of death. Man, by his rebellion against God, inspired all nature to rise in revolt against him. Much toil and suffering for him followed this, and only in the sweat of his brow could he gain bread for his support. He had trusted Satan above God. By the tempter's words and advice he had broken God's commands, and this that he might become as God. Therefore men were left by God to the servitude of Satan, and hell became their rightful inheritance. And this is our own portion, this our own inheritance which has come down to us from our first parents.

In thinking over this, my brethren, may we not well exclaim with St. Augustine: "What profit for us to have been created if we had not been redeemed?"

Almighty God, to whom our all is due, was merciful; and, even before man's banishment from Paradise, he received the promise of a coming Saviour. Now who will this Redeemer be? Who is he that shall deliver us from Satan, sin, and hell, and restore to us the lost grace of God? Only One indeed can do it, one who can render satisfaction, can conquer the enemy and master of mankind. And He it is who holds the heavenly treasures in His possession, and is at the same time man; He who should stand as representative of the entire human race by His obedience, as had Adam by his disobedience. Hence we can see that the Redeemer must be God and, at the

same time, man; that God must become man, the God-man, in order to redeem the world.

Only a God-man could render the perfect satisfaction which divine justice claimed. Sin and its culpability are measured by the greatness, the worth of him who is offended, its satisfaction by his worth who satisfies. Now He who is by sin offended is the Most High God, the Infinite: therefore does divine justice call for infinite atonement. No man, no angel, nor can all men and angels together make this atonement. Only a divine man, one who is also God, can effect it, for man indeed must make the atonement, but God alone can give to it infinite value. Sin came from disobedience unto God, from pride, and from forbidden enjoyment of the senses; accordingly, must satisfaction come from perfect obedience, from humiliation, from mortification, from suffering and death. God Himself in no wise can be humiliated, nor can he suffer and die. Hence must the Redeemer be a man; but to give an infinite merit to the obedience, humiliation, suffering and death, this man must, at the same time, be God. Therefore, a God-man alone could render perfect satisfaction, a God-man alone redeem the world.

Again, you will remember that the human race had come under Satan's servitude, and was subject to eternal damnation. Therefore could He alone, who had power over Satan and hell, save us from this. It was needful, however, that Satan should be conquered by a man, as it was man he had vanquished by his infernal cunning, and therefore should he who was to redeem us from his yoke be a man. Thus, again, we see Our Saviour and Redeemer must be both God and man. Hence says our blessed Lord:

"If, therefore, the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed" (St. John viii. 36). He is the stronger man that has come to vanquish Satan and his powers.

There should also be regained for us the heavenly graces lost, the sonship, the friendship of God, and the title to inheritance of the heavenly kingdom. All these, as we have shown, are supernatural gifts, depending on the free grace of God. It must, then, surely be a man, who in the name of men and as a representative of the human race could regain these heavenly treasures, yet, at the same time, must this man be God in order actually to gain these infinite possessions.

Through sin had death entered in the world, and to it the death of man's body was due: for God had created man for immortality. Who, then, could save mankind from death? Only a Saviour who should undergo it for the human race. Therefore must the Redeemer be a man, for God is Life itself and cannot die. Yet His death must possess infinite value; it must gain an eternal glorified existence for the body, a blessed resurrection of the flesh. So, again, must the Redeemer be God, God and man at once, therefore God-man. For He alone, the God-man, Lord of life and death, could break the bonds of death and bring back life.

Lastly, the human race needed a teacher, to free it from error and superstition, by the glorious radiance of divine truth. An example, a standard, divine and human, was needed for the life suitable to children of God. Therefore must God Himself display it: He must walk among us, live and speak and act.

From these considerations it will have become clear to us that the world's redemption must be effected by

one who was at the same time God and man, that consequently God must become man, if man were to be redeemed. And all this shows to us the immeasurable grace of God in our salvation.

The way in which God chose to become man is now to be considered in our second part.

II.

"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us: and we saw His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (St. John i. 14). By these words has the Evangelist St. John declared to us the Incarnation of the Son of God. The "only begotten of the Father," the "Word" that became flesh in the second Person of the Godhead, co-equal with the Father, and begotten of Him from all eternity. The Son of God incarnate is Jesus Christ our Lord. As says the Catholic creed: "I believe in Jesus Christ, our Lord." That Jesus Christ is the Son of God, that He, with the Father and Holy Ghost, is God, are truths so clearly revealed and in every way attested, that, for those who know the testimony, room is not left for reasonable doubt.

"Thou shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High." Thus spake the heavenly Messenger to the Blessed Virgin Mary. At the Baptism in the River Jordan, and again at the Transfiguration on Mount Tabor, the Eternal Father's voice was heard from heaven: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." And from numerous passages of Holy Scripture we know that Jesus declared Himself to be the Son of God. And it was not in secret places He said this of Himself, but

out before the representatives of the chosen people, before their high council. The truth of His words was manifested by his miracles, His holy life, His death upon the Cross, His glorious Resurrection, His Ascension, the institution of His Holy Church and her marvellous continuance and efficacy. The very devils cried aloud, "Thou art the Son of God." Only the most extreme self-blindness or bad faith can deny this truth. The Apostles preached our Lord's Divinity unto the world as a fundamental doctrine. St. John says (I. iv. 14): "And we have seen, and do testify, that the Father hath sent His Son the Saviour of the world." This holy truth has found many millions of believers in all ages. Lives of many martyrs have been gladly yielded up in its defence, and for it others have given up all this world affords to follow Jesus. Unnumbered holy lives have been built upon this truth. For this faith alone it is which makes us sharers of redemption, and opens unto us eternal life. "Now, this is eternal life: That they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent" (St. John xvii. 3).

"The Word was made flesh." The third article of the Apostles' Creed tells us how the Word became flesh: "Conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary." The Blessed Virgin, daughter of Joachim and Anna, was the "woman" promised to our parents whilst yet in Eden who should "crush the serpent's head." She was the Virgin of whom the Prophet Isaias spake seven hundred years before the Incarnation: "Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel," that is, God with us, or man-God.

Mary, the lowly virgin of Nazareth, among all

womankind, was chosen by God to be the Mother of the World's Redeemer. The whole of the Old Testament was a preparation, or gradual leading up to the coming of Christ. In Mary was this preparation fully completed. In her the old covenant is forever ended and the new begins. She is at once the representative, the accomplishment of the old, and the mother of the new dispensation. The wisdom and the goodness of God had endowed her with all blessings, and bestowed on her those perfections that were suited to the exalted dignity of "Mother of God." And far above every creature in heaven and earth as this dignity exalted her, so far must she excel all in her wealth of grace and sanctity. She came into the world untainted by the mark of original sin. As the Mother of the God-man who should conquer Satan, as the woman that should crush the serpent's head, not for one moment could she be subjected by sin to Satan's rule. God made her wondrous strong, gave her such fulness of grace, that in all her life she fell not into actual sin, nor was the least imperfection found in her. Mary, without knowing of the mighty exaltation in store for her, without anticipation of her being the virgin chosen by God, prepared herself unconsciously for this election. From the very moment of her own conception she stood under the special guidance of the Holy Ghost. Her whole life formed a beauteous chain of holy deeds and virtues; and, in her early years, she vowed perpetual virginity. This certainly was done by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost: for at that time it was an action unheard of in Israel. Every family of God's chosen people held the blessed hope of bringing forth the Christ. And therefore every woman looked to marriage, and every family regarded many children as

a great blessing. Indeed, the childless ones were considered to be under a curse, as thus they were excluded from this hope. It would seem, then, as if Mary, by her vow, had denied herself all expectation of bearing the Messias. But, by this very fact, she was prepared for fulfilling a condition required for the maternity of the Saviour; and this entirely without her knowledge of it. For the Mother of God must be, and ever remain a virgin.

Yet by the divine counsel this blessed woman must be married, in order that her descent from David's line should be attested, and that the Jews might not stone her as an adulteress; also in order that she might have a lawful protector during the great event of her life, and that the Child Jesus should have a foster-father. For these great privileges the holy Joseph, a man of David's house, was selected, and to him the Blessed Virgin was betrothed.

When the hour had come, in which the Son of God was to become man, God sent unto this virgin an Angel from heaven to announce to her the Incarnation, and seek her willing consent. Let us go with this heavenly messenger to Nazareth and see the fulfilment of this miraculous event. We shall find Mary in her quiet chamber, doubtless engaged in her own deep devotions. Perhaps she calls to Heaven in the longing words of her forefathers: "Open, heavens; ye clouds, rain down the just One! Open, earth, and bring forth the Saviour." She little thinks the moment is at hand when this prayer is to be so fully answered. Still less does she suppose that on herself the dew of heaven is to fall, that she shall be overshadowed by the clouds, that hers is the virginal womb into which

the rain will descend, and that she shall be the opening earth that bringeth forth the Saviour. Then comes to her the Angel of the Lord, enters her peaceful chamber, and reverently greets the holy virgin as the gracious one, the blessed among women, whom the Lord on High hath chosen as the Mother of the Saviour. Great is her wonder and astonishment at this message; she does not understand her becoming a mother, remembering her vow of virginity, and intending to observe this vow under all circumstances. Therefore is she troubled at the saying and greatly startled, not knowing what the salutation means. Thereon the Angel gives her further explanation, saying: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee; and therefore also the Holy which shall be of thee, shall be called the Son of God." Enlightened by these wondrous words, the Holy Virgin knows that God's wisdom and omnipotence will unite in her divine maternity with virginity. She bends her understanding and her will unto the Divine, submits herself in this, as in all else, with deep humility and with a spirit of most loving obedience. "And Mary said, 'Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to thy word.'"

At the moment of her speaking these words, the Word became flesh, and Mary became the Mother of God.

Thus came our Redeemer to the world as the second Adam, to repair the ruin caused by the first. As with Eve began sin; so with Mary begins redemption. Eve had believed the fallen angel, allowed her pride to lead her on to disobedience, had eaten of the for-

bidden fruit, and given of the same to her husband.

Mary believed the faithful angel, and in humility and true obedience consented to the will and counsel of God. Thus is Mary the new Mother who has borne the new Father of our race. She is the new Eve, the spiritual mother of all living, of all the regenerate, God-redeemed mankind. For with the Incarnation of the Son of God from Mary there at once begins a new race of men; and of this regenerate race the spiritual parents are Jesus and Mary. How true, then, beloved, that on this mystery rests the salvation of mankind! Our holy Church so regards this truth, and holds it in such veneration, that thrice each day would she remind all Christendom thereof. By the solemn tolling of the Angelus bell from the lofty spires of all God's houses does she call her children's minds to this great mystery. And may this loving call of Mother Church, that sounds three times a day o'er field and wood, three times o'er mountain, valley, town, and country—may it, God grant, find echo in the hearts of all the faithful! For thus the Church reminds us day by day, that to the Incarnation of the Son of God we owe all graces, and every blessing we enjoy, especially our sonship unto God. Three times each day does she remind us that we are redeemed from sin, that we are Christians. She admonishes us to live as Christians, as friends of God, as brothers of Jesus Christ, and as children of the holy Virgin Mary. She instructs us to revere, with filial love, her whom all generations shall call blessed, to implore her intercession, to invoke her motherly care; and to think on all these when we say the Angel's salutation. And

we will do this, my beloved, in life and in death. Yes, "Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen."

SERMON II.

The Second Joyful Mystery.

THE VISITATION.

"But when the fulness of time was come, God sent His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, that He might redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons."—*Gal.* iv. 4, 5.

Beloved in Christ the Lord:

The subject of to-day's sermon is the second Joyful Mystery of the holy Rosary, which presents for our consideration the visit of the Blessed Virgin to her cousin Elizabeth; the only visitation mentioned in holy Scripture as made by Mary.

The journey which the holy Virgin here had to make involved no little hardship and difficulties; for Hebron, where Elizabeth dwelt, was at so great a distance from Nazareth that four or five days were required to make the journey. The Evangelist, in narrating the incident, dwells on the fact that Mary went "at once," in the first days after the Angel's salutation, and that she went "in haste." We must conclude from this that some particular signification attached to her visit and that as she, in all things, acted only through inspiration of the Holy Spirit, so here she must have undertaken this journey by His inspiration, and by Him must have been instructed as to the object of the visit. Let us then, dear brethren, see if we too may not learn its object, and as we know of

the fact of the Visitation, let us see if we may not also learn its meaning and lessons.

This visit should give to us a clear knowledge of the purpose of the Incarnation, should tell us why God the Son became man. And the result of this wondrous mystery should first appear in the house of Zachary and the person of St. John, the precursor of our blessed Redeemer. Now the object of Christ's Incarnation is clearly told us by the Apostle of the Gentiles in the words of our text: "God sent His Son, made of a woman, made under the law; that He might redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." That is, that men, children of Adam, inheritors of sin, death, and perdition, should through Christ, the second Adam, become again God's children, children of grace and heirs of heavenly possessions. This adoption as sons of God, Jesus would first bestow upon St. John the Baptist, His chosen herald. And by this visitation all other graces and blessings of Redemption were imparted in abundant measure unto the house of Zachary. These graces all went forth from Jesus, yet were they brought about by Mary, His holy Mother, who, bearing Him within her womb, by her God-inspired visit to the house of Zachary brought with her Heaven's greatest gift and blessings. What was thus done, beloved, for this blessed house was emblematic of what has since been done, and may still be done now and ever for all others. In the family of Zachary we can see a type of the holy Church of Christ, God's kingdom upon earth. As was done there in that holy family, so ever should be done here in Christ's holy Church.

Our Lord Jesus Christ, the second Adam, has become for us the founder and the source of all good

gifts and graces of redemption. This shall be considered in the first part.

Mary, the mother of Jesus, the second Eve, is given us by God as intercessor with her Divine Son. And this shall be the subject of the second part. I continue in the name of Jesus and Mary.

I.

"God sent His Son, made of a woman . . . that we might receive the adoption of sons." He, the Son of God, has become the Son of man; that we, the sons of man, may become the sons of God. As children of men we are born according to the laws of human nature, born in original sin, and all its dread results for time and for eternity. And children of God we can only become through a spiritual, supernatural, and miraculous regeneration, effected by the Holy Spirit.

Christ said in clearest words to Nicodemus: "You must be born again;" "that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (St. John iii. 6).

Therefore, it was this spiritual regeneration which our Lord wished to bestow on St. John the Baptist, His precursor.

The Evangelist St. Luke gives the narrative in these words: "And Mary rising up in those days, went into the hill country with haste, into a city of Juda; and she entered into the house of Zachary and saluted Elizabeth. And it came to pass, that when Elizabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the infant leaped in her womb" (St. Luke i. 39, 41). By the interpretation of the holy Fathers, it was at this

moment that St. John the Baptist was freed from original sin, consecrated to God by sanctifying grace, regenerate as a child of God within his mother's womb, before he ever saw the light of this world. And this was manifested by the leap of her babe in the womb, which Elizabeth felt and announced. This was the manifest fulfilment of the Angel's prophecy to Zachary in the Temple, when he announced to him the birth of a son in his old age. For in these words the Angel spake of that son, "He shall be filled with the Holy Ghost even from his mother's womb." (St. Luke i. 15). This which had been done for John was in a measure typical of what should be done for all, and should become an heirloom for all men by redemption. God sent His Son, made of a woman, that *we* might become His sons. This, then, is really done for us; we are regenerated in the holy Sacrament of Baptism, we are "born again of water and the Holy Ghost." Jesus, alone, from all eternity is the Son of God; by nature and His essence He is the only Son of His Eternal Father; but we are regenerated by grace, and made His sons by adoption. And sons of God we too are, not only in name, but in fact. By our regeneration and adoption we are transformed by God the Holy Ghost, are made partakers of the Divine nature; we receive the supernatural image of God, His mark impressed on our souls, and we resemble Him as doth a child his father. "In Baptism," says St. Gregory of Nazianzen, "Christ has changed us from our old creation into a new one, has changed us from an earthly to a heavenly creature." In Baptism, we "put on Christ," we bear the image of our new Father, we have become brothers of Christ, whom therefore the Apostle terms "first-born of many brethren." To

the Galatians the holy Apostle writes: "All ye who are baptized, have put on Christ." Thereby, beloved, do we partake of the Divine Nature; thereby do we receive the Spirit of Christ, the supernatural mind and filial love by which we are emboldened to say "*Abba*, Father." Thus have we, too, become the sons of God, and heirs of heavenly glory.

In this most blessed state each one of us may find himself so long as he remains in sanctifying grace. For if we men have been regenerated by this wondrous grace, if we have been made, by adoption, sons of God, we surely are obliged to live as should His children; to live our life in keeping with the pattern set by Christ. For He it is who is our Elder Brother and our model. In imitating His holy life on earth consists the true perfection of the Christian's life. For this imitation we need the constant grace of God to enable us to co-operate with His grace already received, to enlighten our intellect, move our heart and strengthen our will-power that we may know all holiness, love it, and fulfil it. For only with this grace are we able to do all things that belong to a Christian and a God fearing life. The Apostle says: "I can do all things through Him who strengthens me;" and it was this strengthening, this co-operating grace that Jesus Christ imparted in the fullest measure to Zachary's house at "the Visitation." Upon Elizabeth were poured the blessings of the Holy Ghost in all profusion. Such radiancy of light illuminated her mind that the greatest mysteries of our salvation were clearly seen by her at once; the Incarnation, the Redemption, and Mary's being the Mother of the Saviour. And this knowledge she expressed in prophetic language in her salutation to the Blessed Vir-

gin : "Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. And whence is this to me, that the Mother of my Lord should come to me. . . . And blessed art thou that hast believed, because those things shall be accomplished that were spoken to thee by the Lord." In these few words what wondrous knowledge is expressed, and insight to the mysteries of the Incarnation and of our redemption. By the enlightening of the Holy Ghost, Elizabeth was the first who realized the wondrous work that had been effected in the Virgin's womb, and the first to salute the Blessed Virgin Mary. At the birth of John, her son, her husband Zachary, in a miraculous manner, received back his power of speech, and the first use he made of it was to proclaim to all the world the mercies of God shown forth in man's redemption, also to proclaim his own son's destined share of that work. This did Zachary in the glorious song of praise, the "Benedictus." Great indeed were the blessings brought to the house of Zachary by the presence of Mary and the Divine Child within her womb. And we cannot doubt that many other blessings, other gifts for time and eternity, besides these mentioned in Holy Scripture, were brought them at this Visitation. For was not there living with them for three months the very founder, the source and dispenser of all graces with purpose of imparting the fulness of His grace ! Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Son of God, has gained for us men all gifts and graces of salvation. He is the source and origin of all the mercies and the blessings which God resolved to bestow on men. His merits are indeed immeasurable, they form a very ocean of graces, gifts and blessings for body and for soul, for time and for eternity. Through

Jesus, therefore, must we seek all blessings, all good gifts, all grace for our salvation, for unto Him we stand indebted for redemption. It was the presence of Jesus which brought to Zachary's house its blessings and its virtues. And thus will it always be for all other men. Apart from Jesus there is no salvation. But Jesus brought these wondrous graces through mediation of His holy Mother. And this, too, happened for our instruction, for as it was then, God ordered it for all future times. The fruits and blessings of redemption that flow to us from Jesus, our new spiritual Father, should, by God's counsel, ever reach us through the intercession of the Mother of our Blessed Redeemer; for she has now become our spiritual mother. And this we shall consider more fully in the second part.

II.

In God's dealings with us, it is to be noted that everything which He does for our salvation, as a rule, is done not by Him directly, but by means of instruments, as angels or men themselves. By such mediation God often wills to be addressed in prayer, and through it to dispense His blessings. This intercession is a general law and practice everywhere expressed in Christianity. It must, however, here be carefully observed that there are two forms of mediation, and these essentially different. In one sense Jesus is our only mediator, in that He has redeemed us, and He has gained for us all grace and heavenly blessings; and therefore He alone can be regarded as the true mediator between God and man. Angels and men, however, God has ordained as mediators, too, but in a different manner. They may be termed

our interceding-mediators. And among these the very highest and most privileged position is given to the Holy Virgin Mary. She is appointed by God as a general and an universal intercessor for all mankind. And all the graces and the virtues that Jesus Christ has gained for us will God confer on us through her. It is in this sense that, with the holy Fathers, we term her our mediator of grace.

Two kinds of graces there are, of blessings, that by Christ's merits, we may receive from God, viz., spiritual and material gifts. And these will God bestow on us through Mary's intercession. This was ever the belief and the doctrine of the holy Fathers of the Church, and also is made clear to us in Holy Scripture. Two incidents are mentioned in the Gospel which manifest its truth. First, Mary's visitation to her cousin Elizabeth, and then the miracle wrought by our Lord at the marriage at Cana.

On the occasion of the visitation, Jesus worked His first miracle on the soul of John the Baptist. For then He freed him from original sin, and gifted him with sanctifying grace. Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost. Zachary received back his power of speech, and at the same time received the gift of prophecy. These graces, though, were brought to them by Mary. The Blessed Virgin was enlightened by the Holy Spirit, was moved to make this visitation and thus she brought our Saviour into the house of Zachary. When the voice of her salutation reached the ears of Elizabeth, then, as I have said, did John become sanctified in his mother's womb. Then the babe leaped with joy in token of this miracle: "For behold, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy"

(St. Luke i. 44). With these words does Elizabeth announce to us this miracle of grace. Great blessings Zachary also received from Mary's presence with the Divine Child in her virginal womb. Jesus would sanctify His precursor and shower other blessings on the house of Zachary, but he willed to do it only through His Mother's mediation. It is the unanimous teaching of the Fathers of the Church that by means of Mary's salutation our Lord did impart those heavenly gifts. And as it happened here, so should it ever be for future ages. All heavenly graces, all virtues for the soul's salvation, should flow to us through mediation of the Holy Mother.

The miracle at the marriage feast in Cana will clearly show us that our Lord will also grant material gifts and benefits through the same holy intercessor. In the realm of nature, the first of Jesus's miracles was the changing of water into wine on this occasion; and this He wrought, however, only at the pleading of His Mother. It was indeed to manifest His own Divinity that our Lord performed this wondrous work, but this was not His only purpose here. He did it also that he might proclaim in public manner His Mother as the intercessor for all natural gifts and bounties. It was indeed done for our instruction, and the lesson should be carefully learned by Christians of all times.

Mary is the Mother of our Saviour. She bore for us the world's Redeemer and has become our spiritual Mother; so should she ever be the intercessor for all graces, all gifts and blessings of redemption. This, with one voice, the Holy Fathers teach, and the wisest and most pious theologians. St. Bernard shall express to us this general teaching in the name of all with his

own eloquent words: "From that moment of time," says he, "when the Holy Virgin conceived in her womb the Word, she has received, as it were, a certain jurisdiction over all the treasures of Grace of the Holy Ghost, so that no creature can receive any grace but through the intercession of the gracious Mother."

Thus speaks the Saint on this subject. And so we find in all the work of man's salvation, the Incarnation, the Redemption, and the dispensing of its blessed fruits, Mary ever united with her Divine Son. Through Mary has Jesus come to us, and through Mary we shall come to Jesus.

We have, as says St. Bonaventure, to ascend three steps in order that we may come to God. The first, and the nearest for us, is Mary; the second is Jesus Christ; and the third is God the Father. In order to reach Jesus we must first come to Mary, as to our interceding-mediator. And in order to reach God the Father, we must first come to Jesus, our redeeming and atoning Mediator. This is the ordinary way for our salvation, and this is the path marked out for us by divine wisdom and Providence. And for us, my brethren, erring, sinful men, could there be a more agreeable route, a more satisfying or a happier way of salvation? God has given to us His only Son, and He has become man; but for His sinlessness, a man as we ourselves are; He came to redeem us, to gain for us salvation. He now reposes all the fulness of this grace in the hands of the Redeemer's Mother, and indeed our Mother, too, that she may bestow this blessing upon her children. And since our heavenly Father hath done these things for us, may He not then justly say: "What is there that I ought to do more to my vineyard that I have not done to it?"

As the Mother of Jesus, the Blessed Virgin has all power of intercession, so that the saints have termed her the interceding Omnipotence. Accordingly she can assist us efficaciously at all times in needs of body and soul. As our Mother, she has a love for us in her maternal heart, far greater than that with which a mere human mother loves her children. Why should she then not help us as often as we call on her? Why should she not be the most powerful mediator between Jesus, her own true Son, and her adopted children? Truly, our Blessed Lady is, next to Jesus, the highest marvel of divine mercy, and of God's great love for man. Oh that all men might learn this truth and fully realize it! He who does not comprehend it cannot truly know or grasp the meaning of our redemption and sanctification.

From consideration of these facts it follows of necessity that we must not only love and venerate the Blessed Virgin with all our heart, but also invoke her powerful intercession with filial confidence, in all our needs of soul and body. That this veneration and invocation of Mary is necessary for salvation is the universal opinion and teaching of the holy Fathers, of Doctors of the Church and pious scholars. With one consent they teach that devotion to Mary is a certain mark of election and is surely needed for salvation; and that want of love and veneration for God's holy Mother is a mark of rejection. St. Bonaventure says: "Whoever neglects the service of Mary will die in sin; whoever does not seek his refuge in thee, my Mother, will surely never go to Heaven."

Let it therefore be for us, beloved in the Lord, a matter of conscience to invoke and venerate the Blessed Virgin. Through her the sinner may obtain

conversion, and he who is converted may make good progress on his pious way and gain the grace of final perseverance. Through her may all believers gain help in every trial of life and sweet comfort at the hour of death.

We know that the holy Rosary is a form of prayer containing means of paying her this veneration, and we know that Mary has a tender regard to this devotion. Whoever, therefore, says this prayer with pious zeal will find it be unto him as a bond by which the Blessed Virgin will gently draw him safely through this life, and through the portal of a happy death, to life eternal.

Oh then remember, meekest Virgin and exalted Mother of God, that never was it known that any one, who full of confidence, flying to thee for refuge and protection, was e'er forsaken. To thy protection then we fly, O holy Mother! Despise not our prayers in our necessity, but ever save us in all dangers, thou who art our intercessor and our mediator. Commend us to thy Son; reconcile us to thy Son; draw us unto thy Son. O holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

SERMON III.

The Third Joyful Mystery.

THE NATIVITY.

"Put on the new man, who, according to God, is created in justice and holiness of truth."—*Eph.* iv. 24.

Beloved in Christ the Lord:

By sin have men fallen into the servitude of Satan; and by sin has Satan risen to be "prince of this world." For by this title has our Lord Himself proclaimed him. The dominion over men thus acquired by the prince of darkness is upheld in a three-fold way; the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life. This concupiscence or lust therefore is called the "spirit of the world," or simply "the world." "For all that is in the world," says the holy Apostle St. John, "is the concupiscence of the flesh, and the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life, which is not of the Father, but is of the world" (1 St. John ii. 16). And St. Augustine says: "By 'world' we do understand those who live after the desires of the world." Hence it is clear that attraction to the world is separation from God; or, as the holy Apostle St James tells us, "whosoever, therefore, will be a friend of this world becometh an enemy of God" (St. James iv. 4).

If Almighty God had not shown mercy unto us, the human race would have rested forever in a helpless state of slavery to the prince of darkness and of hell.

But God the Son, in His compassion, came to us. He became man to break the fetters binding us to sin, and to redeem the world from this unholy thraldom. "The Redeemer came," says St. Augustine, "He paid the ransom, He shed His blood, and bought the world."

In the place of the kingdom of this world, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, Incarnate, founded the kingdom of God, His holy Church, in which men are under servitude of God, and by their faithful service in this kingdom may gain eternal life in the realms of glory. The spirit which shall characterize the servants in this kingdom is the spirit of Jesus Christ, which is in every way opposed to the spirit of the world. It also shows itself in a threefold way, three virtues standing against the vices of the world. They are poverty of spirit, chastity, and humility. And as Jesus Christ became man, not only to redeem us from servitude of the world, but also to show forth to us a model for the life in God's kingdom; so likewise, has He taught these three virtues in a most perfect manner. By word and example has He taught them, and He commenced the practice of them at His very entry into the world, at His birth in the stable at Bethlehem.

The third Joyful Mystery of the Rosary, which we have to consider to-day, brings before us this example of the birth of Christ. Let each of us, therefore, strive to profit by its teaching.

In the first part we shall consider the spirit of the world and servitude to it. In the second part, the spirit of Jesus Christ, the servitude in His kingdom; the spirit of sonship unto God, which is true liberty.

I continue in the name of Jesus and His glorious mother Mary.

I.

The prince of this world has founded and erected his infernal realm on the threefold concupiscence I have spoken of, the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life. The Holy Scripture tells us this is in narrating the seduction of our first parents. Eve went to the forbidden tree and looked on it. At the tempter's instigation she looked, particularly at the fruit; she saw that it was "fair to the eyes" and "good to eat," so she did eat, and gave to her husband, who did eat with her. In this way was the first sin committed. Satan had, however, led them to this forbidden indulgence by arousing first their pride. Hence by these three avenues did sin find its way to man: lust of the eyes, lust of the flesh, and pride. And this same threefold lust is the source of all men's sins. By this the enemy of God and man destroyed the beauteous realm of God in Paradise; and by this established his own kingdom in its stead. By this threefold lust has he continued that rule over the world which he then acquired, and through all ages has plunged the human race in endless misery for time and for eternity. It is through lust of the eyes that Satan first draws the soul's allegiance off from God and fixes it in bondage to the world. For he who yields to this becomes a slave to greed and avarice; he makes an idol of his earthly goods, and gives the first place in his heart to Mammon. This is ever the result of avarice. Even as they who worship idols adore their images of wood and stone and metal, and offer sacrifice to them, so does the covetous man adore his silver and his gold, makes an

idol of his earthly treasures, offers his allegiance unto them, and to them sacrifices health, honor, life, aye, his soul's salvation and eternal bliss. A marked example of this we may read in the book of the prophet Osee. This holy man had spoken earnestly and often to the Jews as to their duty of remaining in their fathers' faith, and he had warned them of their many instances of faithlessness to God. Now and again with holy zeal he denounces their vices and corruptions. And then the tribe of Ephraim, with great audacity, thus answered him: they cared not for the God of Israel, they said; they would have none of him, but had chosen for themselves another God who pleased them better. And what God was it, think you, that satisfied the tribe of Ephraim and pleased them better than the God of Israel? Their own words tell us: "And Ephraim said: But yet I am become rich, I have found me an idol" (Os. xii. 8).

Riches was the idol, Mammon the God that Ephraim had chosen. A God that pleased them better than the living God of Israel whom their fathers served. And to this state a man will be brought by lust of the eyes, covetousness, and avarice. All sense of any higher treasure is lost for him; all thoughts of God's grace and Heaven's blessings leave him; and with his heart set on earthly things he falls into unbelief, idolatry, and every kind of godlessness. If we glance at Judas' sin, and see the motive prompting him to betray his Lord and Master, we learn the spirit which at that time ruled the Jewish nation and the world; for the motive was the gaining of a handful of silver coins; and the spirit dominant was covetousness. It was indeed this very vice, this close attachment to earthly goods, which caused the Jews to bar themselves out

from the Church of Christ. They looked and longed for the Messias' coming, but with Him they hoped to gain the rulership and treasures of the world. The world of heathendom too was wholly given over to this vice, for, knowing nothing of the higher possessions they lived to satisfy the lust of the eyes. How full of meaning then, are the words of the wisest of men: "There is no greater evil than to love money ; for he who does this sells his soul."

Unnumbered are those unhappy souls that have at all times sold themselves for this price ; and we only have to look around the world to see, in our own times, the multitudes that have their heart set wholly upon earthly treasures. The entire training of the mind in education, its influence from cultivation, public and social life, is directed towards the gaining of this world's goods. This is the idol which pleases many men of this day better than the God our fathers served. The example set by the ancient tribe of Ephraim has found followers not only among Jews and heathens, but alas among the Christian nations also. And when these men are spoken to of God, of religion, of faith, and of morality; with heart intent on worldly matters, they reply with Ephraim's audacity, "I am become rich, I have found me an idol."

The second lust by which our enemy strives to draw men from God unto himself, is the lust of the flesh ; and under this there is comprised impurity, immodesty of all kinds, then love of pleasure, intemperance, ease, luxury, and laziness. A veritable pestilence does this lust bring to body and to soul. Of all the foul diseases of the body that originate in it and render man a by-word in society, I will not speak. Their ravages upon the human body give but a faint impression of

their effect on the immortal soul. Once already has this vice brought grievous woe unto the race of man, and plunged it into such a spiritual swamp that no power was left to extricate itself and rise unto its higher destination. So, with the exception of Noe's family, God swept the race from off the earth by the waters of the Deluge. And only by this great flood of water could the earth be cleansed of those stains and corruptions with which it had been polluted by the degenerate race of man. Again in later ages this lust of the flesh brought great calamities on certain places; and this we read of in the account of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrha and the three adjacent cities. And over that very country once occupied by those beauteous cities and fair, fertile fields, now roll the waters of the Dead Sea. In its depths no living being exists, and the noxious vapors rising up from it poison the air for miles around. How fearful a warning and ever-standing lesson to avoid the sinful lust which these unhappy people practised and thereby brought on themselves such everlasting ruin.

At the time of our Divine Redeemer's coming to the world He found the human race given over to this vice. The gods that commanded veneration in the heathen world were represented as having revelled in the lusts of the flesh, and lived a life of luxury amidst nectar and ambrosia. Indeed it was believed that great honor was paid to the gods by the full indulgence of voluptuousness upon their festivals. But let us not raise the veil which time has lowered over these scenes. We should shrink from the sight of fellow-men sunk to the level of unreasoning brutes. Let us rather look at ourselves, our own times, and the world's condition now. What then do we see? Is

the world free to-day from this wretched vice? In our own Christian times is not this lust of the flesh the very pest of society? The youthful life, the family life, how often are they desecrated by it? In very truth it seems as if in certain places the days of heathendom were here again, and the times of Sodom and Gomorrha returned. If the lust of the eyes likens man to earth, the lust of the flesh likens him to the animal and robs him of all spiritual life.

Therefore is the lust of the flesh a powerful means in Satan's hands to bind men with his chains and fetter them for time and all eternity.

Lastly, there is pride, the "pride of life," another of Satan's fatal weapons in warring against men's souls. By arrogance, self-exaltation, vainglory, and ambition do men yield themselves an easy victim to our mighty foe. This pride of life is the foundation and cause of the sins of all the world. With pride began man's fall and the ruin of the human race. By this vice also did the angels fall, and Lucifer raise his rebellious cry in Heaven, "I will not serve." By pride the disobedient angels were led to follow him in his revolt against his Lord and his Creator, and fell from heaven to the deep abyss of hell. "Every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled," and the deep humiliation of these heavenly beings thus followed their self-exaltation; and pride transformed them from blessed spirits of light into devils of darkness.

Pride, and its consequent disobedience, robbed our first parents of a blissful life in Paradise, and, but for God's mercy, would have brought on man the fate which befell the fallen angels. Untold millions of men throughout all ages have also had their fall from

this sin of pride, and with proud Lucifer they have exclaimed, "I will not serve." At the very time of our Divine Redeemer's coming to the earth we can see to what unbounded arrogance proud men were carried; for the emperors of the great Roman Empire were wont to claim the honors due to God.

And how stands the case, my brethren, in our own days with regard to this deadly sin? Do we not now on all sides hear the cry, "I will not serve"? Children will not obey their parents, nor pupils their instructors, servants will not serve their masters, nor subjects their rulers. From pride and arrogance come all revolt against God and His commands, against Christ's Church and her Divine doctrines: also all rejection of authority spiritual and temporal; and every infraction of divine or human law has its root and beginning in pride. "I will not serve" is still the cry, "I will be free from every bar against my passions or my inclinations;" "I will do what I choose to do;" "I will act as I please." Alas, how common in this age are words like these, how prevalent this fatal pride! Of all the deadly sins this one works the greatest evil among men, and is the hardest to eradicate. This is Satan's easiest means for gaining human souls and peopling hell. "Every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled;" and he that lifts himself above his God, above observance of His law, above the precepts of the Church; if he had risen to the stars of heaven he shall be lowered, as was Satan, to the depths of hell.

Thus have we contemplated the spirit of the world, in its main points, and seen the fatal effect of its influence upon mankind for time and for eternity. And may this contemplation fill us all with hatred for the world, this realm of darkness with its threefold

lust. We turn then, my brethren, away from this to contemplate the spirit of Christ, the influence which leads us to salvation. And of this, in the second part.

II.

Our Divine Saviour Jesus Christ came into the world to break the power of Satan's realm of darkness, sin and error; and to establish His kingdom of light, and grace, and truth. And as that realm of Satan had been erected on the threefold lust of which we have treated, so is this kingdom of Christ founded on the threefold virtue, opposed in every way unto those evil lusts, viz., poverty of the spirit, chastity, humility,—and by these three virtues our Blessed Lord exercises His rule.

To the "lust of the eyes," to greed and covetousness, the Divine Redeemer opposes poverty of spirit. He enters into the world amidst the very poorest surroundings, lives in the poorest circumstances, and leaves the world again in abject poverty.

In this mystery of our Lord's birth there is displayed to us a scene of real destitution; and sorrows and humiliations of every kind attend it. And all this, dear brethren, by His own free choice. Not in a royal palace did the King of heaven and earth first see the light of this world, but in a lowly stable. Not warmly clad in royal robes of purple was He, but barely wrapped in swaddling-clothes. On His cradle there was no sign of gold and bright jewels; for it, in truth, was but a manger from which animals took their food. Our Blessed Lord did not, however, continue to dwell in the stable throughout His life, yet that life was never passed in other than a state of

poverty. Real poverty attended Him in His flight into Egypt, at Nazareth, and through every portion of His public life. The words He might have said upon the first day of His life He said at thirty years of age, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head" (St. Luke ix. 58).

As Jesus willingly suffered death to gain for us a life of rest and joy hereafter, so willingly He chose for Himself a life of poverty that we might receive the spiritual riches of Heaven. And this the Apostle teaches when he writes: "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that being rich He became poor for your sakes, that through His poverty you might be rich" (II. Cor. viii. 9). And by His coming our Lord would seek to draw men's thoughts away from undue care for earthly goods, and raise them up unto the Heavenly treasures which man was created to enjoy. St. Thomas Aquinas says: "Therefore by His own example must He teach contempt for wealth and other earthly things. He must lead a life of poverty and indigence on earth, and by this strive to gain men."

The kingdom of Christ is a realm of grace and truth. For service in this kingdom, and for share in its possessions, the mind and heart of men are capable and worthy only when wholly free from inordinate love for earthly things; when free from greed and avarice. In this sense does our Lord say: "Every one of you that doth not renounce all that he possesseth cannot be my disciple." And the first solemn words of teaching that He speaks on the Mount of Beatitudes are: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Thus has Jesus

made poverty of spirit a first condition of service in His kingdom here, and of everlasting bliss with Him hereafter. Poor at heart, therefore, must be every one who would aspire to belong to Christ now and for eternity.

To gain this virtue there must be freedom from all greed and avarice. But only he is truly poor in spirit who holds the heavenly treasures, the grace of God, virtue, and piety, as dearer far to him than all the world's possessions; who rather loses everything he has than lose God's grace or risk in any way his soul's salvation. And this concerns men of all states and classes, be they rich or poor.

Have you been richly endowed and do you own a large share of earthly possessions? Great need then is there for you to be poor in spirit. For you is the admonition which the Apostle writes to Timothy: "Charge the rich of this world not to be high-minded, nor to trust in the uncertainty of riches, but in the living God (who giveth us abundantly all things to enjoy), to do good, to be rich in good works, to give easily, to communicate *to others*, to lay up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on the true life" (I. Tim. vi. 17–21).

Have you no earthly possessions, and are you poor in this world's goods? Still there is need for you to be poor in spirit too. You must forbear repining on account of your poverty, must have no inordinate craving after riches, nor must you envy others their possessions. Let your consolation be to look on Christ, and know that in your poverty you resemble Him. Abide willingly in the state in which God has placed you and accept your lot as coming from His

hand; and He will be with you in every trial of your life. Hear the words of Tobias: "Fear not, my son, we lead indeed a poor life, but we shall have many good things if we fear God and depart from all sin and do that which is good." And holy David says: "I have been young and have become old, and yet saw I never the righteous man forsaken and his seed begging for bread."

He who lives in poverty and at the same time in piety, he truly can be called a happy man. He knows not of the dangers, he feels not the temptations that ever are attendant upon riches. He doth enjoy an inward rest, a divine peace on earth that is a foretaste of eternal joy. "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." He who seeks for nothing else than God alone, is the most truly poor in spirit, and has within his soul the surest token of election.

The kingdom of Christ is a realm of holiness and purity of heart. And to the lust of the flesh our Blessed Lord opposes chastity. "Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God." In God's holy kingdom nothing impure or defiled can find an entrance. Each one must exercise the chastity belonging to his state in life, must keep it, or regain it, if he would have followship with Christ here on earth and glory with Him in heaven. A truly Christian virtue is chastity, an entire subjection of the flesh and its desires unto the law of God. A freely chosen virginity, chosen from pure love of God, is the highest form of this virtue, the most beauteous blossom of Christianity, and the most resplendent flower in the Church of Christ. It makes the soul His bride on earth, and in heaven the holy virgins follow the pure

Lamb, singing ever there the new song that none else can sing. Most highly, therefore, is this virtue reckoned in the kingdom of God on earth and in heaven. Would that it were held in as high esteem by all believers! Forever "blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God."

Lastly, to the pride of life our Saviour has opposed humility, without which no membership of God's kingdom can be had on earth, nor blessedness with Him hereafter. By His Incarnation and throughout His life on earth our Divine Redeemer has shown Himself a perfect model of humility. The Son of the Eternal Father becomes man! O wonderful condescension of God! Had he taken unto Himself the nature of an angel, then would His lowering have been immense; but further still He stoops and takes our human nature. Yet widely differing are the ranks and stations of different men. One rests upon a royal throne, another dwells in a lowly hut in poverty and need. The Son of God chose not the lofty station for Himself, but the lowly one, appearing among men as a servant. He takes upon Himself our own flesh. And this flesh not in any glorious or transfigured state, not even in its strength and perfection of manliness as given to the first man, but weak and very frail in the helplessness of childhood, subject to human sufferings, aye even to death. Thus far, can we not already see the greatest of humiliations in His Incarnation alone? Next to sin itself there is no state lower than the resemblance to sin. He, as the Son of God, could not for a single instant be subject unto sin, and yet He bore the likeness of it on Himself. As our Redeemer and our representative He took on Him the sins of all the

world, and for those sins He suffered and He died. He who did not disdain the Virgin's womb did so humiliate Himself that heaven and earth beheld and marvelled thereat. To what a depth of lowliness did not He submit in the last of His suffering days on earth? For is not He whom angels of heaven adore maltreated as a very criminal, reviled by high and low, by rich and poor, by young and old? He who will one day judge the world is dragged from one tribunal to another, struck in the face, mocked, spat upon and scourged; is shown forth to the rabble for their scoffings. And on the Cross He dies a felon's death between two thieves. All this long course of humiliation has our Saviour meekly borne to meet the sin of pride, the pride of life, that of all sins sits the deepest in the heart of man, and is the hardest to eradicate. All this long course of humiliation has He borne. St. Bernard says, "that man may ever feel ashamed to think well of himself, or in any way exalt himself."

The holy Virgin Mary bore close resemblance in all virtues to her Divine Son, and so in poverty, in chastity and lowliness. Jesus and Mary, in their lives on earth, were the poorest, the purest, and most humble that ever were, or shall be, seen. They were the new spiritual parents of the human race. God's kingdom upon earth began with them. Would we therefore take service in this kingdom we must resemble them, and strive to live in imitation of our parents. The spirit with which they were filled must also be our spirit. Poverty, chastity, and humility, the virtues loved and practised in their lives, must be our virtues too. For these are the very essence of the Christian life by which we con-

secrate ourselves, all that we are and have, to God and to His glory. By poverty of spirit we devote our earthly possessions to Him, either through resignation or through their proper use. By chastity we yield to God our body with its inclinations and desires, and by humility we give to him our mind with all its powers and faculties. Moved by our faith in God's revelation we willingly submit our intellect, our reason; and by obedience to His law we give our will and free devotion. Therefore does he who practises these virtues belong wholly to God; he truly fulfils the destination to which he is created and called.

Accordingly, my brethren, it will now be clear to you why our Lord Jesus Christ has laid these three virtues as the foundation for service in His kingdom, as an essential condition for fellowship with Him on earth and blessedness in heaven. By exercise of these we shall be always freed from Satan's bonds and the world's allurements, and allied unto God. By these virtues has Christ opened and prepared the way for our salvation, and by cultivating the same must we work out that salvation for ourselves.

O holy Virgin, pray for us; thou who by this threefold virtue hast drawn the Son of God from heaven, the world's Redeemer into thy womb, pray for us, that by it we may overcome the spirit of the world, that in our hearts may ever rule the spirit of thy Son; that we may ever live and die resembling Him and thee, and dying thus receive a crown of everlasting glory. Amen.

SERMON IV.

The Fourth Joyful Mystery.

THE PRESENTATION IN THE TEMPLE.

"They that fear the Lord will seek after the things that are well pleasing to Him; and they that love Him shall be filled with His law."—*Eccles.* ii. 19.

Beloved in Christ the Lord:

In order that we might become the sons of God, Jesus Christ, the true Son of God, became the Son of man. This wondrous and consoling truth has already been considered in the first two of the Joyful Mysteries.

Our Blessed Redeemer, the Son of God Incarnate, wished by His life to set for us a model, to show us an example of the life beseeming children of God, that we might learn to dispose ourselves accordingly. For the following of Christ is the true life of every Christian.

At His very entrance into the world, at His birth, our Lord commenced to show us this example, and gave to us an all-important lesson, viz.: the renunciation of this world and the worldly spirit, the spirit fed by the lust of the eyes, lust of the flesh, and pride of life. In the place of this He founded in this world another spiritual kingdom, based upon three virtues opposed to that threefold lust, viz.: poverty of spirit, chastity, and humility. And these three virtues mark

the spirit of Christ, the spirit of His kingdom, the holy Catholic Church. This has been considered in the sermon on the Third Mystery. And now in the Fourth Joyful Mystery, on which we have to meditate to-day, we find another wholesome lesson given us by the Presentation of our Lord in the Temple, which surely teaches us the duty of devoting ourselves to God's service.

The new kingdom which our Lord Jesus Christ has founded is the kingdom of God; in it God rules, and unto Him is due obedience from all creatures that are in heaven or on earth. For this object and to this end God has created man after His own image. He has given us intellect and reason that we may know Him and our own proper duties. He has given us free will that we may serve and obey Him out of love, and by our own desire to do so. And for this service unto Him, we are endowed with all the needed faculties. The servitude of God, however, demands the fulfilment of His holy will, and by the faithful observance and performance of this is the object of our present existence perfectly attained. By always conforming our will unto God's, we honor and serve Him on earth and thereby lay the sure foundation for an eternal life of glory with Him in heaven.

To do God's will, to keep His commandments, this is our object in life. We shall dwell on this at length in the first part of our sermon.

Jesus and Mary have given us a perfect example of this at the Presentation in the Temple. This shall be considered in the second part. I continue in the name of Jesus and His glorious Mother Mary.

I.

We belong to God with all that we are, all that we have, and all that we can do. Would any one deny this? All that exists in heaven and earth proclaims and testifies to this truth. God proves and attests it unto us by all His works. He proclaims it through the creation, through the redemption and sanctification. If any one should plant a tree upon his property, would not the tree and all its fruit belong to him? So do we belong to God, our Creator. To our heavenly Father we belong with body and soul, with all our powers and abilities, material and spiritual, with all our thoughts and feelings, all our words and deeds.

If any one should buy a field, would not that field and all of its productions be his?

Therefore since God, our Saviour, has bought us at the price of His own Precious Blood, is it not evident that He has the fullest right and title to us? The Holy Ghost has regenerated us by His almighty power unto the sonship of God. And there can be no more just claim to ownership than that of the Triune God's of us and our services. To serve Him, however, means to do in everything His holy will, to observe His law, and to keep His commandments.

There is for all created things but one supreme law; and that is the wisdom and the will of God, the Lord of every being. According to this fundamental and eternal law, all things exist and everything is ordered to meet the end and purpose of the great Creator. The all-wise God has laid this law upon a nature aimless and irrational, and that nature blindly

but faithfully follows it. Sun and moon and all heavenly bodies observe this law; the animal, vegetable, and mineral kingdoms on earth yield their obedience. Hence we mark the certain regulation and consequent order reigning through them all, and thus does each and every one of them fulfil the end of its creation.

Also upon the heart of man God has written His eternal law at the creation. To man was given a conscience, and a knowledge of good and evil. But as he was created in the image of God, gifted with reason and free will, therefore he is not forced to observe God's law with the blind obedience of unreasoning creatures, but shall choose that holy service with deliberation and purely from love of God.

In this blessed state the first parents of the human race found themselves until they listened to the whisperings of Satan, and allowed themselves to be led into disobedience. In consequence of their sin, the fast increasing race felt their reason darkened, their will ever more strongly inclined to evil; and lust and passion held sway instead of reason and conscience. Accordingly, it happened that men did not understand or observe the law that was impressed upon their hearts.

After a time God gave to them, besides, the law from Sinai, written on tables of stone, in order that they might see with their eyes and hear with their ears that law which they could no longer read as written on their hearts. And in those ten commandments men could find a manifestation of the wisdom and the will of God. Alas, that there should be some so unreasoning and presumptuous as to set themselves up as critics of these Divine commands, saying that

they are too grievous a restriction to lay on human liberty. Whoever will consider well these holy laws, and bring a sound and reasonable mind to bear on them, will surely see that God's honor and man's welfare demand the same, and not one jot or tittle can be cast aside.

The first three commandments have for their object the honor due to God. And surely man's own reason will tell him that such honor is due: will tell him that he is obliged to worship and adore the Lord of heaven and earth, to reverence Him in heart as well as outward act, and to submit himself entirely to Him; to secure this honor is the first commandment laid down. That God will not allow us to desecrate or blaspheme His holy name, but that it be reverenced and kept holy, the second commandment enjoins.

The third reminds us that a stated portion of our time is to be set apart for God's worship, and that of many days given to men, one day in every week must be consecrated to the honor and service of God. Now surely these are very just and reasonable demands.

The remaining seven commandments deal with our life and intercourse with our fellow-men, and prescribe those things which we should do or leave undone to secure a quiet and peaceful existence for all, and to obtain happiness here and hereafter.

God has placed His representatives in human society, there to preserve order and discipline. And, for us all, these representatives are, to begin with, our parents, then our spiritual and temporal authorities and superiors. Therefore, it is evident that proper love and obedience should be shown by children to their parents, or to those who may occupy their place; by inferiors to their superiors; by members of the Church

to their spiritual authorities, and by all men to their lawful rulers. Indeed, without the recognition of these authorities and due observation of this order, no regulated life on earth could be at all possible.

How could a well-ordered and safe condition of society, and consequent prosperity, exist if every one should treat his neighbor arbitrarily? What would our life be if every man had full liberty to malign, vex, hate, maltreat, and even murder another! If every man were free to deceive, steal, or injure the property of others! If women and innocence were not safe, and the holy bonds of marriage not kept sacred! Surely to cast aside these salutary laws would be to let go welfare, peace, and moral order. Hence, in every way, these ten divine commands are salutary and necessary. Yes, each and every one of them are strictly right and just; and, in consideration of God's honor, not one single iota can be omitted. They are set forth to us as the work of Divine wisdom and goodness; they are indeed an immeasurable blessing to the human race from God. It is only those who are irrational, faithless, and those who wish to lead immoral lives, who would deny this truth.

In addition to these commands of God there are certain commandments of the Church, and civil laws. It is true that God alone has in Himself the power and right to impose laws; and men possess this right only when authorized and delegated by God. In this way God's kingdom on earth, the Church of Christ, is a lawgiver, and is empowered to lay commands on men. And these commands her children must obey. For Christ Himself has told the bishops of His Church, "He that heareth you, heareth me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me" (St. Luke, x. 16).

It is not, however, the intention of the Church to lay heavy burdens on her children's shoulders or make the yoke of Christ a grievous one in giving new commands. Through her holy precepts she only will explain the spirit of our Lord's commands more perfectly to all, and will define the way for our observing them.

Thus the first of the precepts of the Church reminds us that we must observe the first commandment, and tells us how to do it, i.e., by the attention and devout observation of the Lord's day and the holy-days. The second declares that in order to keep these days holy in a fitting manner we must be present at the holy Mass. The Christian law demands that we should deny ourselves and follow Jesus and mortify our sensual inclinations. Therefore does the Church's third precept prescribe a way to this by fasting.

In instituting the holy sacraments of the Altar and of Penance, Our Blessed Lord expressed His will that we should forever draw from these fountains of grace; and so the Church lays an obligation upon all to receive these holy sacraments at least once a year.

Accordingly the commandments of the Church are seen to preserve us from a neglect of holy duties, move us to a godly and a penitential life, and thereby aid us in securing our eternal welfare. And if we would secure salvation these precepts of the Church must be most carefully observed by us. They are as strictly binding upon us as the commands of God Himself. Indeed, they are the commands of God. They are expressions of His wisdom and His will which He has revealed to us through the Church: "If he will not hear the Church let him be to thee as the heathen and the publican" (St. Matt. xviii. 17).

Again, all temporal authority and civil power rest on divine institution to preserve and increase order, peace, and prosperity for men. And unto all lawful decrees of the State, if not in violation of God's and the Church's law, we also owe obedience. In event of these temporal rulers demanding from us something opposed to the laws of God, then by word of the Apostle our course is clear, "we must obey the word of God rather than the word of man."

Finally God manifests His holy will to us in sundry dispensations and happenings which tend to serve our true welfare. Unto these we must submit ourselves with patient resignation and full confidence in God.

All these, then, my brethren, are the laws and regulations by which Divine goodness and wisdom surrounds the path which leads us to the end for which we were created. It is through faithful observance of these laws on our part that we glorify God on earth, conform our will to His, and thereby advance in holiness and justice even as God is holy and just. And thus we do obtain at length the eternal bliss to which our God has called us.

II.

Jesus Christ and His holy Mother have become models for us in the way of all obedience to divine commands, and Christ our Saviour has gained for us the grace that we may be enabled faithfully to keep these holy laws. And now as to this consideration in the second part.

We may read in St. Matt. v. 17, that our Divine Redeemer said: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets; I am not come to destroy but to fulfil." The prophets had already seen in

Christ the accomplisher and fulfilment of the law. This in very truth has Jesus been. The old covenant with its law was a foreshadowing of the new: it was a teacher and instructor until Christ came. For, says the Apostle (Rom. x. 4), "the end of the law is Christ." Christ's Church is the consummation of that which the old covenant foreshadowed. It is the true kingdom of God on earth. Therefore is the law of this kingdom the consummation of that former law. For Jesus Himself gave to it this consummation and indorsed the same. In truth He exalted men to a far superior position, and placed the standard for our lives nearer to God, therefore He gave nobler and more perfect laws and powers, and more holy and spiritual motives were taught by Him and planted in man's heart. In the ancient covenant God was known to men as a master, men knew themselves as His servants. By the Incarnation of the Son of God men became His brethren, and children of their heavenly Father and Creator. With this inheritance of sonship unto God, these regenerate ones received a new love for Him, received it from water and the Holy Ghost. In speaking of this the Apostle uses these words: "For you have not received the spirit of bondage again in fear; but you have received the spirit of adoption of sons, whereby we cry, *Abba* (Father)" (Rom. viii. 15). This spirit of adoption that calls God Father is nothing else than filial love for God. God's friendliness towards men and His infinite compassion have been displayed in Jesus Christ, and in the loving fire of His love our hearts must be enkindled. Our Blessed Lord has said, "I am come to cast fire on the earth, and what will I but that it be kindled" (St. Luke, xii. 49).

And it is this fire of love of the Son of God that must inflame the hearts of all God's children.

Let us love God, for He has first loved us, says the Apostle. And Christ has written this law of love upon our hearts through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit together with His seal of our adoption as sons of God.

The very first and highest command of the Christian religion is Love. Yes, it is a command; and one that includes within itself all other commandments. Our Saviour tells us this Himself when He says: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind. This is the greatest and first commandment. And the second is like to this. Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments dependeth the whole law and the prophets."

Love it is, love for God before all else, and love for our neighbor as ourselves, this is the full accomplishment and end of all laws, the end of all revelation to us from God under the old as under the new dispensation. It is indeed the true fulfilment of the old, the bond of all perfection, the very essence of the law's accomplishment and of all virtues.

He who loves his God with this love taught by Jesus Christ belongs soul and body unto Him. With loving, perfect faith he serves God; with true humility he waits on Him; and with joyful obedience and patient resignation he seeks to do His will. With all his thoughts he serves him, and words and deeds; in joys and sorrows, in evil hap and good, and in every condition of his life he meekly bows his head unto the will of God.

He who loves God with this love, for His sake also

willingly submits himself unto God's representatives on earth, in the family, in the State, and in the Church.

Not only does he keep a portion of God's law, but strives to be obedient to it all. Not only does he observe the three commandments that look to God, but also those other seven referring to his neighbor. For he loves his neighbor as himself. And this true desire for our neighbor's welfare and earnest love for him is our surest proof of loving God.

Furthermore, our blessed Redeemer has perfected the law of love, in that He has taught us to love not only those who are our friends, but also our very enemies. And just by this love for those who hated them were the Disciples of Christ to show that they were children of their heavenly Father, whose sun rises on good and evil, and whose rain descends on just and unjust. In this is manifested the highest, yes, the supernatural perfection of the Christian moral law.

Not only by words has Jesus Christ laid down this law in the clearest manner, but by His deeds and example has He taught it. Indeed, whatever He has taught by words He had already taught by deeds. His preaching began not till His thirtieth year, but His teaching by actions dated from his entrance into the world. He came among us as our first Spiritual Father, by His obedience to make amends for the disobedience of our father in the flesh. Hence He says, as we read (St. John vi. 38): "I came down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of Him that sent me."

And He did so readily perform His Father's will and with such holy relish, that He calls it, in another

place, His food, His very meat and drink to do the will of God.

As a child, when lying in His mother's arms, the holy Jesus suffered Himself to be obedient to the law of Moses, to be offered in the Temple at Jerusalem. And by this presentation His life was publicly offered to His Father. Then began the great atonement, the mystery of suffering and sacrifice that was with Him through all His life; and in His Passion and His Cross on Calvary found its height and consummation.

When kneeling on Mount Olivet His human nature had trembled at the prospect of His cruel death, and Jesus said, "Father, not my will, but thine be done." Thus, through all His agonies of soul and body, in thought, word, and deed He fulfilled His Father's will until at last He could exclaim: "It is consummated."

In all this has our Divine Redeemer, by his obedience, not only atoned for man's disobedience, but also has left for us the full and perfect example of the measure of our submission and obedience in all things unto God. From the days of early youth He has shown us we must serve God, and keep His commands until the day of death. And he has taught us that we too must present ourselves to our heavenly Father in our infancy, and continue in His service throughout life. "Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth, before the time of affliction come" (Eccl. xii. 1). With these words does the Holy Ghost admonish us how important are our youthful days. As is the childhood, so, as a rule, is the manhood. "A young man according to his way, even when he is old he will not depart from it" (Prov. xxii. 6). Are the days of early life spent in idleness, sin, and vice, then we may

read the usual end of such a course in the book of Job (xx. 11): "His bones shall be filled with the vices of his youth, and they shall sleep with him in the dust."

Not only must we begin in our youth to serve God, but must forever continue in that holy service; and with all our powers of soul and body must submit ourselves at all times and under all circumstances to His will. And "it is not enough," says St. Francis de Sales, "for us to will what God wills, we must also will the manner and the circumstances as he wills them."

Lastly, my brethren, we must ever persevere in our submission to God unto the very end of life, that with our Lord, we, too, may then say, "It is consummated, I have fulfilled thy will, O my Father, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." If we can say these words, then full of confidence we may commend our spirit unto the hands of our heavenly Father, with full certainty of our entering on that life of bliss to which we have been called.

Our Divine Redeemer has shown us by his life that it is possible to lead a life in keeping with God's commandments. He has gained for us the grace in most abundant measure to do so, and we may always receive this grace by use of His appointed means.

Mary, the Mother of Jesus, was truly conformed to Him in all things. To meet the will of God and the fulfilment of the Divine commands was ever the first thought of her mind. The unconditional submission unto God in all His dispensations was her constant study and practice.

As a child she gave herself to the service of God in the Temple. When the Divine call came to her,

she returned to the house of her parents and was subject unto them. When the Angelic Messenger announced God's choice of her to be the Mother of the Saviour, she said: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to thy word." When the aged Simeon made known to her that a "sword should pierce her heart," then too she bowed her head in full submission to God's will. She shared with Jesus all His shame and humiliations, she partook of His sufferings. She journeyed with Him to Golgotha on the way of the Cross. She stood near to Him crucified. Her soul was wrung with His anguish, and she yielded Him a sacrifice for redemption of the world.

Therefore is Mary our mother, our first spiritual mother, the second Eve. She is our model and example in her holy life of true obedience unto God, and full submission to His will in every dispensation. This gracious mother, too, is our intercessor, to gain for us all graces that we need to follow her example, and to imitate the life of Christ.

Let us, then, one and all, frame our lives after this holy pattern; let us devote our days in youth unto our spiritual parents Jesus and Mary, and perseveringly continue in subjection to them. And ever let us bear in mind the glorious end in store for us. For if we yield to God a zealous and a faithful service here, if we honor and exalt His name on earth by obedience to His law, most surely do we thus fulfil the end of our existence, and most surely shall we reap an eternal reward in heaven.

Yes, Lord, to Thee be all our life devoted. In Thy blessed service, in obedience to Thy laws, and in full submission to Thy holy will, we wish to live and die. By Thy glorious Mother's intercession give us the grace to accomplish this! Amen.

SERMON V.

The Fifth Joyful Mystery.

THE FINDING IN THE TEMPLE.

"Behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world."—*St. Matt.* xxviii. 20.

Beloved in Christ the Lord:

In the course of our sermons on the holy Rosary we have come to the last of the Joyful Mysteries: the finding of the Child Jesus in the Temple. This shall be the subject of our discourse to-day.

When Jesus was twelve years of age, His parents took Him to Jerusalem with them to observe the Paschal solemnities. On leaving the city to return to their home, the Child Jesus remained in Jerusalem without the knowledge of His parents. They had travelled one day's journey before they discovered that the Child was not among the company, and immediately hastened back to Jerusalem in search of Him. There, after looking for three days, they found Him in the Temple, sitting among the learned men and doctors of Israel, hearing their discourse, and asking them questions. And we are told that all the people wondered greatly at the wisdom with which He conversed.

This, my brethren, is a brief narrative of the event which claims our attention to-day. Simple as the incident may seem, and unimportant as it may appear

when contrasted with other wondrous scenes of our Lord's life, yet, believe me, its meaning and the lesson it bears for us is of grave import, and very full of comfort for us all.

That incident which happened in the Temple at Jerusalem had a mysterious and prophetic meaning. The entire old covenant was an emblem of the new. The Temple of the Jews was but a type of Christ's Church. In this Temple has Jesus appeared on three solemn and marked occasions. The first was when His Mother offered Him in her arms to God. The second as a boy twelve years of age. The third was on Palm Sunday, on the occasion of His triumphant entry in the city of Jerusalem. This threefold visitation is also emblematic. For our Divine Redeemer thus has revealed and exercised His threefold office of Prophet, Priest, and King. At the Presentation in the Temple, when offered in His Mother's arms, He began the great atoning sacrifice for our redemption; that work He consummated on the Cross at Calvary, and thus displays to us His priestly office.

In boyhood, at the age of twelve, he appears in the Temple in His prophetic office as a teacher. And at His solemn entrance on Palm Sunday we see Him in His royal office, appearing as a king.

By the exercise of the functions of these three offices has Jesus Christ redeemed the world from error, sin, and slavery to Satan.

As King He has established a realm of God on earth ; and this, dear brethren, is the holy Church, a kingdom of truth and grace. Therein He has ordained a threefold office to give men freedom from error, sin, and bondage, and He charged His Apostles and their true successors with this threefold office, that

it might be continued to the end of time, when this realm of grace and truth on earth shall become the realm of everlasting glory. He also pledged His word to His Apostles that He would always be with them, even to the consummation of the world.

Therefore our Divine Redeemer forever lives and acts in His holy Church through His own appointed representatives, and here we may, now and ever, find Him as Prophet, Priest, and King.

This threefold office shall be our subject for consideration to-day. In the first part we shall consider Jesus as King and teacher of the world. In the second as our great High Priest. I continue in the name of Jesus and of Mary.

I.

The Son of God came to this earth to overthrow the empire of Satan, the realm of error, sin, and servitude, and to establish in its stead the kingdom of God, the realm of truth and grace and freedom.

This kingdom, I have said, is the holy Catholic Church; and King of this realm is our Saviour Jesus Christ. "And he hath on his garment and on his thigh written: King of kings, and Lord of Lords" (Apoc. xix. 16). To Him the Father has committed the government of the world. All power in heaven and on earth is given to Him: power to subdue unto His rule the whole creation. He is the highest Lawgiver. And the Father has also given into His hands the future judgment of the world. The Apostles and their successors He empowered to act as His vicars. He constituted them His visible representatives on earth, executors of His will in the Church. With

these mighty powers He clothed them as He was about leaving this world to return to the Father. He charged them with the threefold office by which He had redeemed the world, and by continual exercise of which they were to extend forever to a redeemed world the fruits of salvation. "All power is given to me in heaven and in earth; going, therefore, teach ye all nations: baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world" (St. Matt. xxviii. 18–20). God's Church then is His kingdom upon earth, founded by our Saviour Jesus Christ, a realm of grace and truth, in which He reigns as King, and ever lives and dwells among His children in the blessed Sacrament of the altar.

This holy kingdom transcends in power and majesty all earthly realms. For to the spiritual power of the Church all kings and rulers of the world must subject themselves; from her they must receive the light of truth and grace to gain salvation for their souls. The laws and rule in this kingdom are the laws and rule of God Himself. An enemy of the Church is therefore an enemy of God.

Jesus came as a Prophet, a teacher sent from heaven, and announced to all mankind Divine truths. Before returning to His heavenly Father He commissioned His Disciples to carry His teachings to all nations of the earth.

God's revelation to men, in fact, began in Paradise with the beginning of our race, was continued throughout the old dispensation, and found in Christ its fulness and consummation. "In many ways in times past hath

God spoken to the fathers by the prophets: last of all, in these days, he hath spoken to us by his Son." Thus writes St. Paul. St. Augustine has compared religion to a holy city, the building up of which began at the creation of the world and reached its full perfection in our Saviour. And truly thus it is with Christianity, the only true religion. It came not to the world suddenly as though dropped from heaven. Indeed the world is created and prepared for Christianity, and man's soul, as Tertullian says, is by its very nature ordered and disposed for the religion of Christ.

Yes, it is in the garden of Eden that true religion, Christianity, begins. The founding of the Church begins in Paradise with our first parents. The whole of the Old Testament is a prototype of Christianity, an adumbration of the Christian Church. It leads men on to Christ, and teaches them, until He comes and finishes the structure of the Church, endows her with all truth and the fulness of all grace, and opens wide her doors to all mankind.

God the Son, Jesus Christ, who is very Truth itself, has fully, and without chance of error, taught the Divine truths. Therefore, when charging His Disciples to proclaim His holy teachings unto all nations, He invested them, by power of the Holy Ghost, with the same infallibility, in their office of teacher, as was possessed by Himself. And by the power of the same Holy Spirit is the teaching Church, and her head, infallible to-day in doctrines as to faith and morals. How full of meaning, then, are those words of the Apostle, when he speaks of the Church as "the pillar and ground of truth"! The Church, and she alone is ordained of God to be the teacher of all nations.

She, and she alone, is possessed of the fulness of Divine truth, has the gift of infallibility to preserve that truth complete, pure, and unimpaired; and to proclaim, expound, and define the same. How comforting and how grateful a thought is this for all Catholics to dwell upon! For we know that we are in full possession of the true faith complete. This gives a blessed feeling of security in all our thoughts, words, and deeds, our action and inaction. While those misguided ones who hold erroneous beliefs, who put their trust in mere human opinions, are tossed about by every wind and wave, are forever restless and changeful in their creeds, and live and die in sad uncertainty.

In the Divine doctrines of our holy Church, we have a sure and certain guide for every step we take along life's path; we have the heavenly way for reaching Christian perfection; for gaining eternal bliss, as surely as though Christ Himself were visibly present as our leader.

The first duty of every Catholic is to recognize the Divine authority of the Church, and to yield a steadfast faith to her unerring doctrines, and put full trust in everything the Church teaches and presents for our belief. For without faith there can be no justification, and no salvation possible. Without faith it is impossible to please God.

Our Divine Redeemer has said: "He that believeth not shall be condemned." And St. Thomas writes "that a man must believe in God, as a pupil the master who instructs him, in order that he may reach his destined end."

Faith, therefore, is the only way which leads to justification and to true contemplation of God. Yes, even here on earth we have a foretaste of the Divine

vision which awaits us in perfection in heaven. There is for every soul a threefold light: first, the natural light of reason, whereby we see the things of nature and dwell upon their meaning; then, the supernatural light of faith, by which the soul is enabled to grasp and firmly hold revealed and supernatural truths of faith; lastly, the light of glory beyond, which, added to the light of reason and of faith, permits the elect of God to see Him as He is, and be with Him forever glorified and happy. This light of glory is but the perfecting and consummation of the light of faith; and where there is no contemplation of God by faith here, there can be no true vision of Him hereafter. As darkness rests upon the earth when the sun's rays are withdrawn, so all is dark within the human soul, and full of ignorance is she, in matters of religion and salvation, without the illuminating radiance of Divine faith.

Therefore it is that we often see men most renowned for worldly knowledge completely in the dark as to divine truths and matters of faith. They are indeed unable to receive them. And a little child, that has just mastered the contents of his catechism, has far more knowledge of things pertaining to salvation and religious matters every way, than can be gained by faithless men of science.

"Without faith," says St. Chrysostom, "thou canst not understand the very least of all God's works."

Unbelief most surely makes men blind; a blindness, too, which is a far greater disaster than the loss of eyesight, or of reason. For such a state of darkness is even the beginning of the eternal gloom of hell; "he that believeth not shall be condemned" (St. Mark xvi. 16).

By the infallible teaching office of the Catholic Church, which presents and defines the faith to us, we are immensely blessed; and a gracious benefit is conferred on us throughout our days on earth. God has not chosen, however, to bestow this benefit on all men or all nations. How many millions are there upon earth all buried in the abominations of Paganism! How many cling with hardened heart to Judaism, and cherish still the stubbornness of their forefathers! And, alas, how many infidels and heretics are found in the very midst of Christian lands! One and all, they lack the grace of faith. Among these, no doubt, some will be found who lead an upright life, and this no Catholic need deny; some will be found naturally kind, honorable, and temperate; but the foundation and true motive of all righteousness is not there, for this is faith. They appear to men to be progressing, but they walk not in the right way, and therefore cannot reach their true destination.

My brethren, do you realize this blessing you possess? Think you, have you deserved this heavenly gift of faith? The holy Scripture tell us that Noe, and his family alone, found safety from the Deluge in the ark: but tells us also the reason, because he was righteous before the Lord. By what reason then have we deserved to find place in the Church, the ark of salvation? Indeed, dear friends, in no way have we merited so great a boon; but purely through the wondrous grace of God has it been granted us. As the Apostle tells us; "for by grace you are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, for it is the gift of God" (Eph. ii. 8).

Therefore must we incessantly return our thanks to God for a gift so immeasurable and all undeserved,

a gift which brings to us all other graces needed to attain eternal life. And we must manifest this gratitude, by ever holding fast unto our faith, by valuing it above all that the world contains, by openly professing and confessing it, that we may live and die according to its precepts. Then may we truly hope our faith shall one day change into the light of glory, revealing to our new-found sight the beatific vision.

We have seen, then, that Jesus Christ exercises and continues His prophetic or teaching office, in the Church "all days." That His priestly office also is continued, we have now to consider in our second part.

II.

Jesus Christ perpetuates His holy priesthood in the Church, "even to the consummation of the world."

The most important duties of the priestly office are to offer sacrifice to God, the highest Lord of heaven and earth; and to stand in mediation, as it were, between God and His people.

Through the priests, men offer unto God themselves, and all that they possess, in willing sacrifice: they offer all creatures, all powers and faculties to Him. And God himself fills the priest's hand to overflowing with graces and with blessing for mankind. But the priest's first duty is to offer sacrifice to God.

Every religion has some sacrificial rite; and without sacrifice there can be no true divine service. By reason of our relation to God, we are bound to bring our life and all our faculties in subjection to Him. We must offer unto God all our capacity, our powers of soul and body, all that He has bestowed on us in our creation, redemption, and sanctification. By doing

this we render honor and glory unto God, we show our gratitude to Him as the author of our blessings, and our dependence on Him for a continuation of His bounty towards us.

Such sacrifice as this was imposed upon our first parents in Paradise, by God Himself, to be the constant duty of their life. They were to cultivate the garden of Eden, and preserve it from the influence of the fallen spirits. They were to abstain from tasting the fruit of one tree in the garden, but were given others in abundance, whose fruit they might freely enjoy. In this way they were to offer sacrifice of their body by labor and self-denial; and of their spirit by obedience; thus yielding themselves wholly unto God. By due enjoyment of the productions of the garden, they added to their own material nature, and thus elevated the fruits of the earth to be, as it were, a part of themselves. In this way all creation was made a sacrifice of adoration to the Lord of All, an offering of love, and a prayer for the glorification of God. Had men continued ever to offer this sacrifice with filial obedience and humble submission, then would the offering ever have proved an acceptable one to God, and all sufficient for men to have gained for themselves eternal joys of heaven.

But when our parents fell, refusing this humble sacrifice, and aspiring, in their pride, to be like God; then they forfeited His sanctifying grace, they lost the power of satisfying God, and drew a blighting curse upon themselves and on all nature subject to them. Thus did they render themselves, and all creatures with them, unworthy as an offering unto God. Instead of honoring, such sacrifice would but have dishonored Him. Without our Saviour's offer-

ing, without the great sacrifice of our Redemption made by the Incarnate Son of God, men would have been forever incapable of yielding a pleasing offering to God, incapable of serving Him, or of obtaining eternal life. Indeed, they would have an eternal offering to hell and Satan.

As God, in His mercy, willed to save the human race and all creation ; as he willed to redeem and reinstate them by His only begotten Son ; so willed He that sacrifice should be continued to Him after the fall of man, and he himself ordained and specified the objects men were to sacrifice and offer unto Him; He Himself instituted a priesthood under the old covenant for the offering of this sacrifice. Instead of offering their unworthy selves, God ordained that men should offer unblemished animals. And these vicarious offerings should ever serve to remind men of their own sinfulness and unworthiness, and of the penalty of eternal and temporal death they had incurred by sin. These sacrifices should serve also as a foreshowing of the future atonement of the promised Messias, and should typify His sacrifice. They had, indeed, no virtue in themselves, no power to please or reconcile a justly offended God ; but through faith in the promised Redeemer they derived a certain force and efficacy by uniting them to the all-atoning sacrifice of the coming Christ.

In the fulness of time the Messias came. The Son of God was made man, and offered Himself up in the name and place of all mankind. He offered His whole life, His superabundant and infinite merits, from His birth until His death on the Cross. And this mighty sacrifice was highly acceptable to God. By this one sacrifice all type and shadows were fulfilled; and men

henceforth possessed an offering whereby God could worthily be honored, and an acceptable service rendered unto Him; a sacrifice with power to pardon sin, and capable of bringing down all graces; a true sacrifice of adoration, praise, thanksgiving, and atonement. This offering God willed that men should always possess; and Jesus, at the Last Supper with His Apostles, instituted the sacrifice of the Mass, which unceasingly is offered by the priests of the Catholic Church, and shall be continued to the consummation of the world. This holy offering is the worthiest, indeed the only true, divine service upon earth; the most exalted worship of Almighty God. It is in truth the Son of God, equal with the Father and the Holy Ghost, who offers Himself in His own human nature a sacrifice for men. And we can make this Sacrifice our own; we can offer it with Jesus in the same spirit, unite soul and body, our whole being and all we have, and thus present ourselves in union with Him an offering to the Most High God.

So it is that, as far as sacrifice is concerned, the condition of man in Paradise before the fall is now re-established. The whole creation is sanctified by the sacrifice of Christ, and restored to its destined end, the glorification of the Creator. Only in the one true Church of Christ can we find the true priesthood, the one true sacrifice of the Mass, and the one true service worthy of God.

Now you readily will understand why the Catholic Church so carefully observes and cherishes the holy Mass. Why she considers this to be the very centre of all divine service, and arranges all ecclesiastical solemnities, all ceremonies and worship with fitting reference thereto.

Apart from the priesthood there is no consecration, there is no Divine authority to offer the Holy Sacrifice. Apart from that sacred office all is as merely human work as any worldly matter. Let us then realize our blessing in having this mighty office and this worthy and efficacious offering.

Another duty of the priest is to serve as a dispenser of graces and blessings from God to men. "Let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ, and the dispensers of the mysteries of God" (1 Cor. iv. 1). From the holy sacrifice of the Mass doth flow all graces and all blessings which God bestows upon us, as from an inexhaustible fountain; for there the self-same sacrifice is offered which Christ made on the Cross. All seven sacraments, however, are channels through which God's grace flows. By these means the faithful are sanctified, and grace is offered enabling them to live according to the teaching of our faith, to advance in holiness and on to Christian perfection, and gain a heavenly home.

In holy Baptism man is regenerated, born again of water and the Holy Ghost, and is enabled to live as a child of God.

By Confirmation he is strengthened in the life of grace and armed to do battle with the enemies of his salvation.

The holy Sacrament of the Altar gives nourishment to his soul, and unites him very closely to God.

Penance is as a second baptism, blotting out sins, and fanning to a flame the waning sparks of grace.

Extreme Unction frees him who is about to leave this life from the penalty of sin, and strengthens him for the last decisive contest.

By Holy Orders the ministers of the Church and the

dispensers of God's mysteries are empowered to a worthy administration of their sacred duties, and thereby the faithful are enabled to receive the fruits of salvation.

And lastly holy Marriage pours Heaven's blessings upon the Christian union, and gives grace to train up offspring in the Church as upon sacred soil.

All events and states of life are cared for, and our solemn duty is zealously and worthily to use these means of grace.

As King, Prophet, and Priest, we still find Jesus in the Church, ruling, teaching, and sanctifying our life on earth, and ever leading us on to a heavenly abode.

When the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph found Jesus in the Temple they were filled with holy joy. When we now find Him in His Church have we not reason to rejoice, and thank God for so great a blessing? Can we ever think highly enough of the holy Catholic Church? With what zeal should we embrace and love her! How we should strive with all our might to further her welfare, and exalt her; to co-operate with her by word and deed, and always by much prayer. Especially are we at this time bound to this last as a strict duty.

O gracious Queen of the most holy Rosary, thou Mother of our Church, pray thou with us for her welfare, her progress, her exaltation, and a glorious victory over all her enemies. Implore for us God's grace that in our earthly life we may seek none but Jesus, thy beloved Son, may find Him here by His grace and wondrous condescension, and hereafter in His own true glory. Pray for us that we may live and die as faithful children of holy Church, and through the door of a blessed death may pass from her fold militant here below, unto her arms triumphant in heaven. Amen.

SERMON VI.

The First Sorrowful Mystery.

THE AGONY IN THE GARDEN.

"My soul is sorrowful even unto death."—*St. Matt.* xxvi. 38.

Beloved in Christ the Lord:

With the preceding sermon we have ended our consideration of the five Joyful Mysteries of the holy Rosary. In dwelling on those events we have seen, as it were, the foundation laid of our Divine Redeemer's work; and we trust that many wholesome lessons for the Christian life have been brought to your minds.

We ask you now to give your attention and your careful thought to our discourse on the Sorrowful Mysteries. For in these events we shall see the carrying out of our Lord's redeeming work, and from them shall trust to gain instruction as to the way in which we may individually partake of the blessings of redemption.

By His Passion Our Saviour entered upon the last stage of His work. When kneeling in the Garden, and contemplating all the sins which He had taken on Himself, and knowing the heart-rending torture awaiting Him, He was seized with an agony so great as to force the sweat as drops of blood through the pores of His skin. From this we learn to estimate the grievousness of sin, and we learn our course in freeing ourselves from its guilt; that is by beginning

to realize the number, magnitude, and culpability of our sins, feeling the grievous weight of them upon our souls, and repenting from the bottom of our hearts. At the same time, by His agony, Our Blessed Lord has gained for us abundant grace.

The next stage in His Passion was the scourging at the pillar. This painful disgrace He took upon Himself to atone for our sins of the flesh. Then by the degradation of being crowned with thorns, and jeered at by the populace, He would atone for sins of the spirit. Teaching us the need of mortification both of body and spirit.

After this we see Him laden with His heavy Cross, journeying His painful way to Calvary. Our sins, original and actual, have made the life of every man a "Way of the Cross." Therefore did Jesus go this way to make the journey easier for us, to gain for us the strength to bear our cross, and to render the way for us a penance for our debt of sin, a meritorious way through life by which we might gain heaven.

At last we see Him crucified. We, by our sins, deserved death temporal and eternal. His Death upon the Cross was infinitely satisfactory, redeemed us from eternal death, and made the loss of earthly life at once a meritorious sacrifice and gain of life in heaven.

Thus was the work of our redemption consummated. By Our Saviour's Passion and Death a solemn lesson is taught us, and an example given for gaining deliverance from sin and death and inheriting eternal life. From this brief survey you readily can see the grave importance to us all of these five Sorrowful Mysteries of the holy Rosary. With tearful eyes and bleeding heart we ever should meditate upon them,

and with the deepest sympathy recall to mind Christ's Passion, and the grief of His Virgin Mother.

To-day our subject is the First Sorrowful Mystery, the agony and anguish which filled our Saviour's heart on feeling the weight of our sins which He carried. And realizing this, as far as we can, we may learn to feel a just hatred and detestation of sin, and with contrite heart strive to escape the penalty thereof. I continue in the name of the suffering Jesus and His sorrowful Virgin Mother.

I.

In the first place, my well-beloved brethren, let us contemplate with pitying hearts the events connected with Our Blessed Lord's agony in the Garden.

After eating the Pasch with His Disciples, and after instituting the Blessed Sacrament, Jesus went out with them unto the Mount of Olives, there to enter on the first stage of His Passion.

It was in a garden, under fruitful trees, that sin first entered in the world, and it was in a garden that Our Divine Redeemer began His great atonement. Let us go, in spirit, and be with Him there awhile.

On arriving at the place, our Saviour falls upon His knees before His heavenly Father and gives Himself to long and earnest prayer. He had already said to His Disciples: "My soul is sorrowful even unto death." Therefore before He parted from them His sacred heart was weighed down with its load of grief. And now as He kneels in prayer alone before the Father's face, His sorrow is redoubled, and His bitter anguish so increased that His precious blood

is forced through the pores of His sacred skin and falls trickling to the ground. St. Luke says: "His sweat became as drops of blood trickling down upon the ground."

The greatest conceivable anguish is needed to produce a bloody sweat. And this anguish was experienced by Our Saviour, was offered for us to His heavenly Father as part of His great atoning sacrifice. Now let us seek the cause of this excessive grief. We know that all our sins have their origin in our spirit; and, as the soul of man derives pleasure from the commission of sins, so would Our Blessed Lord begin the atonement for sin by agony of soul. The causes, however, that produced this agony were principally three. First, the contemplation of the sins of the whole world. For as the hour had now come in which Jesus was about to consummate His sacrifice, His thoughts are turned with great distinctness to the grievous sinfulness of the world, and to the inconceivable difficulties of His sacrifice. He would once more present unto His Father His entire readiness to do His work. Therefore does Our Redeemer represent to Himself all the sins for which He is to atone. He brings them vividly before Him as though committed in His very sight. Remember that He is the Living God; hence everything of the past, present and future at once is clear and open to His view. He sees before Him every sin from the first one wrought in Paradise to the last one to be committed before the Day of Judgment. He sees all sins of evil lusts, of the eye, of the flesh, and pride. He sees every murder, sacrilege and theft; injustice and perjury; hears every blasphemy, detraction, and calumniation; and knows all evil thoughts, lusts, and

every unholy wish against God, our neighbor, and ourself. Thine own sins also, O Christian, of which thou hast been guilty, thine every thought, word, and deed; every sin of omission and commission, are there before the mind of Jesus when kneeling in the garden of Gethsemane. If ever thou hast yielded to temptation and committed sin in some dark corner of the earth out of all sight of men, that sin stands out before His eyes as if in noonday light.

But it is not only the number of our sins that Jesus sees and so heartily laments. He sees all circumstances connected with each one, the evil motive, the malice, the want of love, and the base ingratitude displayed in every sin. For He alone can truly know the Divine majesty offended by the sin, and the baseness and degradation of the sinner. Yes, my brethren, Jesus in His agony does fully realize the whole world's shamelessness and want of love for God; does realize, as He alone can, the ingratitude and want of faith attending every sin which you in your life have wilfully committed. Each mortal sin especially is, in God's sight, so great an evil and so opposed to His Divine holiness, that no man nor angel can realize its guilt. Yet this realization was fully present with Our Saviour. He saw and rightly estimated the grievous weight of the sins of all the world; and took this burden on His shoulders as though it were His own. It is no marvel, then, that a great anguish seized His soul, no marvel that His holy Body trembled beneath the weight, and that a bloody sweat broke from His forehead and ran trickling to the ground. St. Thomas has said, in speaking of the agony: "To render satisfaction for the sins of all men, Jesus took on Himself the full

measure of sorrow that was due for the number and magnitude of those sins." Therefore the anguish of the sacred heart of Jesus was as great as the sum of anguish which should possess the soul of all sinners for their sins, but which, alas, can never be done.

Consider now, O Christian, that it is from love for thee that our Saviour has taken upon Himself this anguish for thy sins. Should not this thought touch the hardest heart, and cause it to yield its love and admiration? St. Ambrose says: "Nothing is more powerful in moving me to admire my Saviour's goodness, than His agony. He truly bore this anguish for me; He had no cause to sorrow for Himself."

Thus we have learned the first cause of Our Blessed Lord's agony in the Garden. It was the contemplation of our sins.

Secondly, He was about to pass through a most trying ordeal, and undergo severest torture in order to atone for sin. The knowledge of this increased His already great anguish.

The measure of satisfaction to be rendered must correspond to the measure of debt incurred, when Divine justice is concerned. Not in all eternity could all mankind together render this satisfaction to God for sin. The Psalmist says: "No brother can redeem, nor shall man redeem; he shall not give to God his ransom, nor the price of the redemption of his soul" (Ps. xlviii. 8, 9).

Jesus Christ alone, at once both God and man, could give what was required, that is, infinite atonement, and could give it purely through His love. Yet, very grievous were the sufferings He took on Himself for this. In the Garden of Olives He brought to His mind the full realization of these sufferings. He dwelt

on each one singly, and then, as it were, passed them all in review before His eyes, as if to fully estimate their total weight, and signify to His heavenly Father His willingness to bear the burden. And thus did Our Redeemer in spirit undergo at once the whole sequence of His tortures, His agonies of soul and body from His seizure in the Garden to His Death on the Cross. He wished at once to test the burden of His Passion. And there, as He knelt in prayer, He laid on His shoulders His betrayal by Judas, His capture by the soldiers, the flight of His own Disciples, His degrading treatment by Annas and Caiphas, the mockery, the scourging, the coronation with thorns, the scoffings, blasphemies, and blows of His base torturers, His sentence to death, His painful journey of the Cross, and, to end all, His painful death by crucifixion. In truth, it is no wonder that the human nature, the human heart of our beloved Lord, was seized with grief, and yielded to anguish so great as to force from Him a bloody sweat. But it is impossible for any words of man to tell the extent and measure of His agony, for it is immeasurable, and incomprehensible to us.

However, in the prospect of these sufferings we may recognize the second cause of His anguish.

Thirdly, He knew full well the ingratitude, the want of faith and love, of countless souls towards Himself.

Oh with what joy would our Redeemer have suffered, could He have foreseen that all the world would reap the fruits of redemption! How gladly would He have looked upon His Passion and Death, if He could also see a grateful world recognizing its immeasurable blessing! Yet what does He really see with His all-

searching eyes? He sees His own bloody sacrifice accomplished. He sees the infant Church, which He purchased with His Blood, assailed at once by Jews and heathens in their attempts to put an end to that Church's life, as they had unto His own. He sees the sufferings of millions of Christian believers, their persecution at the hands of those given over to the prince of darkness, who, instead of partaking of Redemption's blessed fruit, will to reject it and cast themselves and all depending upon them into the depths of hell. Moreover, He sees, in course of time, heresies and false teachers arise, some that deny His own Divinity, spread Godless doctrines, and lead to schism; some who would gladly, even in union with hell's powers, destroy the Church's unity, and cause her overthrow. He sees poor sinners in crowds thronging and jostling others for a place on that broad path that leads to destruction. He sees them rush along with scarce a thought or feeling for their fate, aye, with laughter on their lips going to perdition. If we grieve and sorrow for the misspent life, and death of one soul dear to us, think then of the anguish that filled the heart of Jesus at sight of millions of souls beloved by Him, who, for the sake of earthly goods and earthly joys, forfeit their own salvation. Of Him most surely does the prophet Jeremias say, "Great as the sea is my sorrow."

There is one thought, my brethren, a fearful thought, which should come to us all: Among these countless souls thus hurrying to destruction, has our Divine Redeemer seen any one of us assembled here to-day? Let each one put this question to himself, "Is my soul on that broad road?" If conscience answers yes, oh, hasten from that already crowded path

while there is time; take pity on the agony of Jesus, and on your own precious soul. For the sake of the soul doing this it is that Jesus has borne His Passion. Notwithstanding the base ingratitude of many, He has suffered that some might be saved. The first step in this path of salvation, our Divine Redeemer has pointed out to us in His agony in the Garden. And this is now to be considered.

II.

Our Saviour began His sufferings for our redemption by contemplating the grievous burden of sin and the cruel pains to be borne by Him in making satisfaction. He brought this vividly before His mind and expressed His willingness to carry out the work. By this, my friends, He has made known to us the way of our becoming partakers of His redeeming work. That is, we too must contemplate the grievous weight of our sins, must heartily repent of them, and willingly perform our penance.

If we, by God's grace, would free ourselves from our sins, it is needed, before all things, that we should fully recognize our sinfulness. This is no easy task, for there are few men that truly know themselves. Most people, as a rule, think themselves better than they really are. Self-love and sin conspire to blind us. Is not this true? We are but poor creatures at best, full of sin and faults of every kind. And yet how few of us are really convinced of this truth? Some are deeply sunken in the slough of vice, though not at all regarding themselves as sinners, or at least not acknowledging the fact. Many will think of grievous sins as venial faults, and term them rather

human weaknesses. And, alas, how often are we all deceived in regard to virtue! For sometimes this is nothing but an outward show with no interior merit. The outward works are seen, and to men's eyes seem most righteous; but with a wicked motive or a wrong intention, how evil is their aspect in sight of God. Again, these seemingly virtuous lives are but the result of a placid and easy temperament. And thus it happens that as men are often deceived in the lives of others, so they are deceived in themselves, fail to know themselves and the true state of their own soul. This, indeed, is one chief cause why conversions are so few and insincere with some, and why with others the life of piety soon grows wearisome and hard to bear. Alas, how seldom do we realize the sinfulness of our condition at any time! Our Saviour was seized with the greatest anguish, was agitated to the sweating of blood, O Christian, at the contemplation of thy sins; and wilt thou rest all unconcerned, unfeeling, and indifferent? The prophet Jeremias says: "With desolation is all the land made desolate: because there is none that considereth in the heart" (Jer. xii. 11).

St. Bernard says, when speaking of the man who fails to examine the secrets of his heart, "He trembles not before himself, only because he is insensible." Therefore if we would be saved from our sins and all their evil penalties, above all things must we search out and probe our conscience with the earnest care that so important a duty demands. Without doing this no improvement in our lives is to be hoped for. How can we correct ourselves unless we know wherein we need correction? How can we improve unless we ascertain where lies the fault? If we would note the

appearance of our face we carefully examine it in a mirror. Then use the same diligence in learning the condition of the soul. The commandments of God, of the Church, the requirements of thy state and station offer thee a mirror for the soul. There is no lack of pious books in these times; and any one of them will furnish such a mirror. Take it in thy hand, behold thy soul, examine it with earnestness, sincerity, and deep humility. Be filled with eagerness for thine own salvation. And pray to our Divine Redeemer that, for the sake of His agony, He will give you light to know your sins. If, after this thorough and sincere self-examination, you have discovered your sins, then realize their guilt and culpability. By every mortal sin you have incurred and merited eternal damnation, and by every venial sin the pains of purgatory. If this does not bring home to you the grievousness of sin, then ask Our Saviour in the Garden of Olives why He trembles so, falls on His face, and sheds His Blood in sweat of anguish! He will say to you: "Malice, hard-heartedness, ingratitude, and faithlessness by which thou hast offended the Most High, and which have yielded thee up to God's justice, have forced on me this agony. For what thou hast deserved I must suffer. If for thee I did not suffer and die, thou shouldst be delivered to the eternal pains of hell."

This fearful fate awaits a mortal sin unforgiven. If, in your whole life you have committed one single mortal sin, you have by it deserved eternal damnation. And perhaps to-day you know of many grievous sins upon your soul.

If you recall to mind no weighty sins to repent of, yet think that every venial sin is a greater ill than all

the other evils of the world. For it deserves the pains of purgatory. Only the thoughtless consider not these matters, and "they tremble not, because they are insensible."

Consider then the Passion and the cruel Death of Jesus Christ and you will see the measure of your anguish due your sins. Yes, it is your sins that scourged your Saviour, crowned Him with thorns, sentenced Him to death, and crucified Him upon the Cross. Contemplate the anguish and the bloody sweat of your Redeemer, and a wholesome fear of God's most righteous judgment should seize your heart. This holy fear should lead you unto righteousness.

Remember, also, that Jesus suffered so grievously from love for you; that He has expiated your sins, for which you could by no means make satisfaction yourself; that He has gained for you the grace of absolution from your sins. Then, although you may truly have a holy fear, you also will have the blessed hope of pardon in your grasp. Fear and hope together in your heart will move you to true contrition and a thorough detestation of sin. Thus is repentance reached; and true repentance united with Christ's merits will bring you pardon for all sins past, and grace to withstand temptation in the future. "A contrite and humbled heart, O God, thou wilt not despise" (Ps. l. 19).

If you would know how great your own repentance should be, consider the sorrows of your Saviour: He for very grief for sin fell prostrate in His agony and shed His blood as sweat. The contemplation of your sins filled the sacred heart of Jesus with this overwhelming grief. This is the measure, then, of our

anguish for our sins; this the extent of our contrition in repenting them. But, alas, how can we, poor creatures that we are, be capable of feeling such heart-rending sorrow? We can have no contrition at all proportionate to the guilt of our sins. Therefore has Jesus by His infinite contrition supplied our lack of it. He, by His excessive anguish in the Garden, has rendered to the Father all that is lacking in our sorrow for our sins.

Therefore, my dear brethren, we should often think of this event in Our Blessed Lord's life. We should often contemplate His agony that our cold hearts may be touched with the fire of His anguish, and that we may be moved to full repentance of our sins. We should implore Him, remembering His bitter grief, to give us a true and heartfelt contrition.

Alas, how many are the earthly things we mourn for! We grieve most sadly our lost possessions; we are filled with sorrow at the death of loved ones, at afflictions, illness, insults, or neglect. And yet we know our sorrow in these cases works no change nor alters the event. But if one of us should be seized with a mighty sorrow for his sins, then, as St. Chrysostom says, "he has cancelled his debts and freed himself from the weight of his transgressions."

It is too often the case that many go to confession lacking sincere contrition and earnest purpose of amending their life. Who could begin to number the sins of sacrilege that are committed in this way. Therefore I say to you that there is no more certain remedy for our lack of sorrow than the consideration of this First Sorrowful Mystery of the holy Rosary. No more safe approach to the sacrament of penance than prayer to Jesus in His agony for true contrition

and to the sorrowful Virgin Mother for intercession in our behalf. Our Divine Redeemer has nothing more dear to His heart than the reconciliation of sinners with His heavenly Father, and therefore has the Blessed Virgin no more welcome titles than "Mother of mercy," "Refuge of sinners."

Grant us, therefore, O merciful Jesus, by Thy agony and bloody sweat of anguish that we may ever know our sins, may earnestly detest them, and repent of them with deep and true contrition. Grant us the grace of pardon, perseverance in all goodness, and at the last eternal life in heaven. O gracious Mary, give weight to our most feeble prayer by thy all-powerful intercession. Amen.

SERMON VII.

The Second Sorrowful Mystery.

THE SCOURGING AT THE PILLAR.

"For if you live according to the flesh, you shall die; but if by the spirit you mortify the deeds of the flesh, you shall live."—*Rom.* viii. 13.

Beloved in Christ the Lord:

In the First Sorrowful Mystery we have seen Our Saviour in His agony in the Garden of Olives. The hour was fast approaching in which the great atonement was to be completed, and a sinful world reconciled to God. Meanwhile the world's Redeemer would survey His work, would weigh the load of sin He was to expiate, also the bitter passion and cruel death in store for Him. All this He brought before Him in His agony. His human nature was thereupon overpowered with anguish, with grief so weighty as to cause a bloody sweat to break from His body. , Yet He faltered not in His work, but, with resignation to His Father's will, He laid this grievous burden on His shoulders and gave Himself a willing victim to be sacrificed.

As the soldiers of the High Priest approached, led by the traitor Judas, Our Blessed Lord arose, went forward to meet them, and voluntarily surrendered Himself. How suddenly the peaceful quiet of the place is broken! That silent Garden of Gethsemane, hallowed and sanctified by Jesus' prayer, at once

becomes a scene of noisy strife. The enemies of Jesus crowd round their captive; the band of soldiers and servants of the High Priest, and the Pharisees, surround their prisoner. Truly they have selected a fitting time, dark night, for this black deed. As the great St. Leo well has said: "The sons of darkness rushed upon the true Light, and, though they carried torches and lanterns in the hand, escaped not from the darkness of unbelief. They failed to see in Him the author of all light: and so they made Him captive. By His own will He permitted this to be done, for had He willed to make resistance, the ungodly hand that touched Him would have withered on the instant; but then the world's redemption would not have been effected, and He who was to die to save all, if he Had spared Himself, would have redeemed none."

This base betrayal and captivity was full of humiliations for the Divine Redeemer, and brought great grief and sorrow to His heart. This sorrow He manifested in these words of sad reproach: "Are you come out, as it were against a thief, with swords and clubs? When I was daily with you in the Temple, you did not stretch forth your hands against me: but this is your hour and the power of darkness" (St. Luke xxii. 52–3). Thus Jesus allows Himself to be fettered and led captive by His enemies in order to burst our bonds and free us from them. His base tormentors drag Him to the council hall, and there He is sentenced to death. Pilate, the Roman governor, should confirm the sentence, but declares He can find no guilt in Him. Notwithstanding this, he orders Jesus to be scourged.

This scourging, my brethren, is the Second Sor-

rowful Mystery of the holy Rosary, and is our subject for consideration to-day. In it we shall find a most important lesson taught us by our beloved Lord Himself.

Our Divine Redeemer made full atonement, not for sins of one particular kind or another, but for sins of every kind. By His scourging, however, He willed to expiate especially the sins of the flesh. This we shall consider at length in the course of our sermon. For in this Mystery Jesus would impress on us the need of discipline of the flesh and of all evil instincts; also would gain for us the grace to practise it. I continue in the name of the suffering Jesus and his sorrowful Mother Mary.

I.

Every kind of sin committed requires a corresponding satisfaction. By the shame and pain of His scourging, Our Blessed Lord does penance for material sins, or sins of the flesh. These sins arise from man's abuse of his body and of material things around us in the world. And the most notable among them are lasciviousness, intemperance, gluttony, luxuriousness, and pampering of the body. That sins of this description are very hateful in God's sight, is manifested by the history of the Deluge. We read in Holy Scripture that at that time all flesh had become corrupt; the children of God had gone astray, and had yielded themselves to the evil lusts of their heart. So grievous had their lives become that God repented that He had created man: and surely nothing stronger could be said, in testimony of God's abomination of sins of impurity, than this. Moreover, the same is

witnessed to by the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrha and the three neighboring cities, which God destroyed solely by reason of the material sins and shameless lives of their people. No trace or vestige of these once beautiful places remained, but their very foundations were upturned ; and the whole region, which had seemed a very paradise, was submerged by the noxious waters of the Dead Sea. And these polluted waves roll to this day a silent witness to God's horror of such vices.

But, alas ! who could pretend to reckon up the instances, in the world's history, of the abuse by men of material things. To render satisfaction for all these sins it was, that Our Divine Redeemer took on Himself the shameful scourging. And, indeed, this Sorrowful Mystery does bear stronger witness than all else to God's abhorrence thereof. Surer testimony of their guilt in His sight than the Deluge or the fall of the five cities. Let us therefore consider with great attention this Mystery.

Punishment by scourging was, of old, a most painful and degrading ordeal. It was commonly reserved, by Roman law, for slaves and abject criminals. In undergoing this the Innocent Jesus allowed Himself to meet the treatment due to the very basest sort of crimes. He stands in the place of sinners ; He bears the punishment merited by them.

Pilate, the Roman governor, delivered Him to the hands of enemies bent on torturing Him. These monsters straightway seize on Him as famished and blood-thirsty beasts pounce on their prey. With savage blows and mockery they bring Him to the scourging pillar, which stood a short distance from the judgment hall. This pillar is but a few feet in

height; so that the victim, when bound to it, finds his body twisted in a strained position and incapable of motion. It was a common event for the condemned man to die under the lash, while fastened to this pillar. Here they dragged Our Saviour; and on arriving at the place His human nature trembled and shuddered at its aspect. His garments were torn from His sacred body by rude and violent, but all too willing, hands, and were thrown upon the ground before the pillar. O holy angels in heaven, veil your eyes ye cannot endure to view this fearful sight, this shame and sorrow, this humiliation of your gracious Lord.

The wretched men bind Jesus to the pillar, and begin their heartless work. The implements in use for scourging were rods or short sticks, with thongs of hide attached, and fastened to the end of the thongs were pieces of sharpened bone, balls of metal, or iron nails. Even had the scourging with these deadly weapons lasted but a minute, it would have been scarcely bearable: but this torture was endured by Our Redeemer for three quarters of an hour; and only ended from very weariness of His tormentors. So deeply was His holy body lacerated that the floor beneath was dyed with His blood. His anguish and His sufferings were inconceivable, and though His sighs were frequent, no murmuring complaint escaped His lips. Truly did the Psalmist prophesy of Him: "The wicked have wrought upon my back: they have lengthened their iniquity "(Ps. cxxviii. 3). For here we see the prophecy fulfilled. Isaias also, with prophetic words, said: "From the sole of the foot unto the top of the head, there is no soundness therein: wounds and bruises and swelling sores: they are

not bound up, nor dressed, nor fomented with oil" (Is. i. 6). When speaking these words the prophet saw Our Blessed Saviour bound to the pillar, and with prophetic sight witnessed His scourging.

Therefore we may realize, as far as we can do so, how grievous were the sufferings and how deep the shame of Our Redeemer at His scourging. In truth, His human nature would surely have succumbed to this torture, unless His own divine power had upheld Him. The reason for our Lord's enduring this ordeal is also told us by the prophet Isaias: he says, "He was wounded for our iniquities, He was bruised for our sins" (Is. liii. 5). Yes, it was for our transgressions that Jesus gave His holy body to be bruised, to render satisfaction for our sins, and in particular for sins of the flesh: to do penance for our luxury, our slothful, easy lives, for all use of forbidden pleasures, as for abuse of things allowed.

I have said that the anguish and shame of the scourging showed us most clearly the guilt of sensual sins; and this consideration is surely a powerful motive for us to avoid the same. Yet even this is wholly insufficient in many cases. What multitudes there are with little or no idea of the measure of these evils; for this alone would account for their recklessness in yielding themselves openly to a life of sin. They seem regardless of their guilt and wholly reckless of their danger, because, forsooth, they term them "natural gratifications." Great sins with all the attending scandal are termed by them mere "human weaknesses," are said to be "natural" to us, and therefore permitted. What wretched insolence, to use a language so immoral, and to boast of hideous vices as though they were heroic deeds! Look upon

your Saviour when being lashed and scourged, torture endured by Him to atone for sensual sins, and there you may behold the guilt and culpability of such vices in the sight of God. May all men contemplate this scene and realize its meaning, and be filled with great abhorrence for material sins. He who is not touched in heart by such consideration is surely past all cure.

Our Saviour, by His scourging, would not only teach us the grievous wickedness of the sins of the flesh and render satisfaction for them; but, at the same time, would impress on us the necessity of bodily discipline. And by His own patient submission to the sufferings He bore, has gained the grace for us to mortify ourselves.

II.

Original sin has bequeathed to us many fearful evils, and among them a violent innate longing towards anything that tends to please our senses and yield material enjoyment. Daily experience confirms what Holy Scripture teaches; namely, that the "desires and thoughts of the heart of man are evil, from his youth." This longing for self-gratification is deeply rooted in our nature, and will remain there as long as we are clothed with mortal flesh. It is the root of faults and sins unnumbered. It often urges to intemperate use of such things as we find to yield us pleasure through our senses. And again it moves us to abuse our powers and faculties that God has given us for a higher purpose. From these inordinate cravings and desires arises that inward discord of our nature, which makes our whole existence one long warfare.

St. Paul, in writing to the Romans, says: "I am delighted with the law of God, according to the inward man: but I see another law in my members, fighting against the law of my mind, and captivating me in the law of sin" (Rom. vii. 22–3).

If we do feed and nourish this innate sensuality by yielding weakly to its cravings, we soon will find it overpowering and enslaving us; and by all reason and divine teaching we thus debar ourselves from all spiritual progress. No single conquest is more necessary to the pious and God-fearing Christian than for the spirit to overcome the desires of our flesh. God said to Cain: "The lust thereof shall be under thee, and thou shalt have dominion over it" (Gen. ix. 7). These words are meant for all men and for all times. Now, in order to rule our carnal nature with any certainty, it is necessary to exercise strict discipline over ourselves. And the very first step in this direction is that, in using those things needed for support and nourishment of our body, we should observe due moderation.

We are in need of many things for the sustenance and protection of the body. We need food and clothing, rest and recreation after exertion. And in satisfying these wants we must observe a certain moderation. We must remember always that we do not live to eat and drink, and pass our time in idleness and luxury, but we eat and drink to live and to gain strength for our work.

Without this moderation in nourishing our bodies, without a temperate use of food and drink, self-discipline of any kind is impossible. Desire does not realize where necessity ends, because desires, if unbridled, are insatiable. Hence inordinate appetites

must be held in check by temperance, or else all passions become uncontrolled and beyond restraint. Our Lord Himself has warned us to be watchful of ourselves in this respect. He says: "Take heed to yourselves lest perhaps your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness and cares of this life: and that day come upon you suddenly" (St. Luke xxi. 34).

Due moderation in apparel also should be observed. Our dress must be such as is suitable to our sex and condition of life; and as is required by health and modesty. Above all else, morality should never be offended. And far more care is to be bestowed on inward purity and beauty of the soul than on outward raiment or adornment of the body. Cardinal Bona has said: "It is a wretched pride for men to wear purple and gold without and to cherish an impure heart within." The habit of wearing fine and costly clothing fosters many faults and small vices, and usually betokens an over-indulgent and voluptuous nature. He who bestows much care upon his body can take but little heed of his soul.

Our rest, our recreation and enjoyments must likewise be taken in moderation. Pleasures that offend God, or occasion scandal, of course may never be indulged in; we must confine ourselves to such as are innocent. We must be careful to avoid all boisterous festivities and dissipations by which our evil inclinations or passions are aroused. For surely a man who is striving hard to extinguish a fire would not be so senseless as to pour on oil. Even in the enjoyment of our harmless pleasures we must be moderate. Only the temperate man, who is accustomed to ruling himself in all things, can be truly chaste. All want of due restraint and moderation is food for voluptuous-

ness, and is an abasement of man, who is created in God's own image, gifted with reason and free will. "The lust thereof shall be under thee, and thou shalt have dominion over it."

God has given to us our faculties that we may use them in His service, according to His laws and commandments. By these laws idleness can find no place in our life; but work, corresponding to the condition in life, is enjoined upon us all. Whoever works for glory of God and performs his daily duties with diligence and perseverance, may find in his very work a most excellent means of self-discipline. The root of every vice is idleness. And the idle man is almost always voluptuous and self-indulgent.

And yet, dear brethren, it will not do for us to rest content with exercising a certain restraint upon our appetites. It is not enough to be moderate in our nourishment, attire, recreation, rest, and pleasures; we must not only avoid over-indulging our desires, but also we must mortify the same.

All holy men and saints of every age have strictly practised mortification of the flesh. And this has consisted not merely in observing moderation in all permitted pleasures, but even in the full surrender of them at times.

If we deny ourselves a certain recreation, or abstain from the ordinary measure of our food, drink, rest, or sleep, then do we practise self-mortification. If this be done from love of God, and if, by zealous perseverance, we have become habituated to this self-denial, then may we be said to possess the saintly virtue of mortification. This is indeed attended with much trouble and difficulty at first, but if persevered in becomes more bearable. And the less irksome that you find this practice, the more perfectly you have ac-

quired the virtue, and the more secure is your eternal welfare.

It is needful for us all, then, to educate ourselves in this manner; a voluntary self-mortification must be carefully observed in order that we may gain a habit of self-restraint, and thus be able more easily to rule ourselves in desires and pleasures that are sinful. He who does not make a habit of doing this, but only denies himself at long intervals, or on some great occasions, he hardly will succeed in striving against the evil lusts of the flesh, and seldom gain a full and perfect victory.

The holy Church reminds the faithful of their duty in this respect by enjoining certain ecclesiastical fasts. By this she requires a constant practice of this virtue and obliges her faithful children to exercise habitual self-restraint. No one who truly understands this holy ordinance of the Church and sees its object can fail to recognize therein a measure most wise and salutary for us all. Those who are in earnest in their religion and strive to lead a spiritual life here to save their soul hereafter, they always are found most faithful in their observance of the Church's fasts. And those who slight these holy seasons, or blame and condemn the ordinances, often prove thereby their own sensuality, and always betray an entire misconception of the spiritual life as well as of Christianity itself.

I dare to say that he who has not begun to mortify himself has not yet entered on a Christian life; he who does not constantly observe the discipline and mortification of the flesh while walking in the flesh, will be an easy victim to its evil lusts and a child of everlasting perdition. "For if you live according to the

flesh you shall die; but if by the spirit you mortify the deeds of the flesh you shall live."

Discipline and mortification of the flesh is therefore necessary for us all; and not only must we practise it to avoid carnal sins, but also to do penance for past offences. St. Gregory says of this: "Whoever has to charge himself with any impurities let him take pains to deprive himself of some permitted things." Have you sinned much, then you must do much penance! Our Lord's own words affirm this when He bids us bring forth fruits worthy of penance.

Besides, this holy practice is needed to sanctify our body. This is effected by making the body subject to the soul, the carnal nature to the spiritual. And thus the spirit regulates all motions of the body with all its faculties and capacities, and rules according to the intention and will of God. St. Paul says: "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the lusts thereof." The more we wear down and weaken our body by self-discipline, the greater strength and power is acquired by the spirit. The lives of saints and holy men have manifested the truth of this; and indeed they have proclaimed it themselves in their writings. St. Thomas à Kempis has said these very words: "The more the flesh is subdued, the more the spirit is strengthened." Yes, upon this depends our sanctification; for the mortification of the desires of the flesh is food for the growth of the spirit. Any one who seeks to lead a spiritual life in any other way than that demanded by the Christian religion is certain to deceive himself or allow himself to be deceived by Satan.

Finally, my brethren, Our Blessed Redeemer has gained grace for us by His scourging; has gained us

strength to overcome all sensuality and lusts of the flesh, and to practise self-discipline. A most gracious boon is this; for, without the help of divine grace, we should be overcome in every conflict with our passions, and fall in abject slavery to the flesh.

The beautiful virtues of purity and chastity in one's state of life are truly Christian, and only possible in Christianity. We may attain them by the grace of Christ especially obtained by His scourging. Hence, when tempted, it is a potent defence to dwell upon this Sorrowful Mystery, and to implore our Saviour, for the sake of His suffering, to grant us grace to overcome.

Another means to gain this grace is by receiving the Blessed Sacrament of the altar, in which we partake of the Body and Blood of Christ, the most pure Lamb of God. This is indeed the bread of angels, and the seed from which true virgins spring.

Moreover, he who would lead a pure and chaste life must venerate in a filial manner the Blessed Virgin; he must confidently call on her in all temptations to impurity which may assail him.

The constant intercourse with Jesus and Mary, occasioned by the use of the Rosary, is well adapted to sanctify the mind, heart, body, and soul. Let us then, my beloved, one and all be diligent in use of this devotion.

Holy and immaculate Virgin, sorrowful Mother of Our Redeemer, pray for us, and be our shield in all temptations. Obtain for us the grace to exercise self-discipline, to lead a life of Christian mortification that our body being subdued our spirit may gain strength, and we, despising worldly things, at last may find our happiness in heaven. Amen.

SERMON VIII.

The Third Sorrowful Mystery.

THE CROWNING OF JESUS WITH THORNS.

"Every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled: and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."—*St. Luke* xiv. 11.

Beloved in Christ the Lord:

As the nature of man is a twofold one, consisting of body and soul, so there are two kinds of sins corrupting it, viz., sins of the flesh, and sins of the spirit.

The sins of the flesh result from man's intemperate abuse of his body and the sensual things of this world, from too much care and pampering of his flesh, and from gratifying its desires in a way contrary to the will and law of God. For this kind of sins particularly Our Blessed Redeemer would atone in the Sorrowful Mystery of His scourging at the pillar. At the same time, however, through that humiliating anguish, He has left us an example, and while He has charged us thereby with the discipline and mortification of the flesh, has gained for us grace sufficient to practise the same. The scourging of Our Blessed Lord was the subject of our last meditation on the Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary. And now, by His crowning with thorns, Jesus would atone especially for sins of the spirit; and, by the same, also would teach us the necessity for the spirit's discipline.

The sins of the spirit result from man's abuse of his spiritual abilities: of his intellect and reason by pride, and of his free will by choosing to disobey, rather than obey, the divine law. Now, the end for which God has given man intellect and reason is that we may know Him and serve Him in all things. And free will has God given that we may willingly submit ourselves to His holy law, humbly conforming our own to the divine will; in short, that we may give up ourselves entirely to Him in a spirit of trustful, childlike love. If, then, we use our intellect in seeking our own glory, our own honor, and if we use our free will to follow our own fancies, our own passions, most sadly do we misuse the former by presumptuous pride, and the latter by reckless revolt against Almighty God. Indeed, we then put ourselves in the place of our God; proudly and arrogantly dethroning Him and enthroning self. And this, dear brethren, is the very greatest offence against the Majesty of the most High. This could never be allowed by Him to go unpunished. For this most grievous sin of pride, the proper penalty is abasement. And our Lord Jesus Christ, in His deep humiliation, has taken upon Himself these spiritual sins. "Every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled." For man's self-exaltation Jesus Christ would render satisfaction. And, therefore, has He suffered the deepest humiliation in the crowning with thorns. The "Ecce Homo," the Saviour crowned with thorns, is the deep well of humiliation into which proud revolt has thrown mankind. And by this depth of humility He pays penalty for that proud revolt.

Let us consider, in the first place, the humiliation; and in the second, the exaltation. I continue in the

name of the thorn-crowned Jesus and His sorrowful Mother Mary.

I.

"Every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled."

The greater the height of his exaltation in pride and rebellion against God, the lower will be the depth of his humiliation. Heaven and earth and hell furnish us the proofs of this.

To what glory, to what power and blessedness had not God created the angels of heaven! They were His own faithful image, His own chosen ones, with whom, in a paternal way, He communicated. They were designed to take part, for all eternity, in the honor, power, and glory of God. But, for this, they should acknowledge Him as their Creator and their Lord; as the life-giver, and dispenser of all their heavenly possessions. It was Lucifer first, who failed in this. He first allowed his pride to rise within him; and, with insolent presumption, said: "I will ascend above the highest of the clouds, I will be like unto the Most High" (Is. xiv. 14).

He would be like unto God Himself. Therefore, said he, "I will not serve." Thus speaks a creature to his Creator; and, with him thus spake a third part of the company of angels; with him they rose up in rebellion against God.

Must we not exclaim with horror, aye, with indignation: What fearful presumption! what rebellious pride!

At the sight of this the Archangel Michael, inspired with holy wrath, cried out through heaven's expanse: "Who is like unto God?" "Who dare assert his vain-

glorious belief that he is the equal of the Most High God?" "Who go so far as to rebel against the Almighty?"

What punishment, beloved, is due to this presumption? The very lowest disgrace and abasement alone can answer such a sin. Therefore did God cast out Lucifer and his kindred spirits; and from the blessed height of heaven plunged them into the foul abyss of hell. There He flung them, not with His own arm, however, but through the hands of Michael and the company of faithful angels. For there was warfare fierce in heaven, and the faithful host raised battle against the dragon and his angels, conquered them, and behold, their place was found no more in heaven. This we are taught by the holy Apostle St. John in the Apocalypse.

And this shameful fall, this fearful degradation came to heavenly beings, came to them through pride and self-exaltation. To this humiliation and terrible punishment even angels of heaven were brought through disobedience.

Let us now betake ourselves to the Garden of Eden; and there, too, in the first of our own race we shall find something resembling this.

God had created Adam in His own image: had gifted him with reason and free will. And these gifts had been bestowed on him that he might know God; and knowing, love and serve Him in filial obedience. Eternal life, eternal glory and happiness awaited his faithful servants. In a very Paradise of bliss was Adam placed by God. King and lord of all visible creation was he made. Upon his head was laid a beauteous crown of power and splendor, which regal emblem was to be inherited by all his descendants. Alas, that he

should have fallen from this high estate, as fall he did. It was through pride and disobedience that Satan had fallen from the height of glory to the depth of misery. And to his own presumptuous sins did Satan seduce our first parents. A similar punishment, therefore, to that which the fallen angels had received was now due to the first of the race of man. The grace, the friendship of God was lost. They were banished and barred out from paradise; and but for the mercy of God would have been cast at once into the lowest pit of hell. Thus was the crown of an earthly kingdom lost to man; and thus was lost the happy prospect of a crown of glory in heaven.

How lowered by their pride and disobedience were our first parents, and how humbled and cast down thereby are all their descendants! No longer loving intercourse and friendship with God; but in place thereof His enmity. And instead of happy sonship unto Him, servitude to Satan and the passions. The very earth received a blighting curse from Adam's fall; bearing but thorns and thistles, yielding her fruit with deep reluctance, and only then when wrested from her in the toil and care and the sweat of man's brow. A garden never more for man, a paradise no longer; but an arid wilderness, and wretched vale of tears. And yet, withal, this earthly misery was but a shadow of the everlasting wretchedness of hell. which man had merited by his disobedience. And to this disobedience had they brought themselves by pride; pride, which, the Holy Spirit teaches, is the very root of all sins. For we read in Book of Tobias (iv. 14), "From it all perdition took its beginning."

How closely, too, have the descendants of Adam, from the very beginning followed the example and partaken of the grievous sin of our first parent. With them also has been pride, and its consequent disobedience, the prime reason of countless other sins. All revolt against God and His Anointed, of which the world's history informs us; all unbelief; all heresies; all the infatuations about liberty that have at various times spread destructively over the world; all persecutions of God's Church; all strifes of men; all evils, political, social, and economical; yes, all known ills that flesh inherits, in pride and arrogance have found their origin. Proud men, as did proud Lucifer, have wished to be like God, have abused their reason and their free will and vainly rebelled against the Most High; with them it has not been to say, "God be blessed and glorified forever," but "Man's reason is his God, all glory be to it." They would not subject their darkened reason to the glorious light of God's revealed truth, nor their will in filial obedience to the divine law. The punishment for all this is tasted even here on earth. The sorrows, the pains of life, the ignominy, the humiliations that have beset mankind through all the centuries of history have come direct from self-exalting pride.

Shall we glance at a picture, dear brethren, a view of what pride and disobedience have done for man,—for man, who at first was king and lord of visible creation?

The Roman Governor, Pontius Pilate, will unveil it to us. "Ecce Homo." Yes, it is the Blessed Jesus crowned with thorns. He it is doing penance for our sins, and shouldering our shame. But let us now and ever take something more than a glance at this

picture. And let us hear the narrative as told us by the holy Apostle St. Matthew (xxvii. 27 *et seq.*). The soldiers had heard that Jesus had called Himself a king; and now they wish, in mockery, to give Him the insignia of majesty, and render Him their mock homage. Therefore they took Jesus to the hall where sat the tribunal of justice. There they placed Him, as a king, upon a stone to represent His throne, and thus in mockery they paid to Him their homage. To make His shame the deeper they assembled their companions and called in the whole band to view the scene. The emblems of royalty and the power of kings are the crown, the robe of purple, and the sceptre. And these were given to Our Blessed Lord to mock His royal dignity. In place of a golden crown studded with brilliant gems, upon His head they put a crown of pointed thorns. In place of a bright and costly robe of purple as worn by kings, they cast around His body a soldier's shabby cloak. And for a sceptre, the distinctive mark of rulership, they placed in His hand a reed. And then when the suffering Jesus had been fully equipped and arrayed as king in mockery before them, they proceeded to revile and scoff at Him. They fell before Him on their knees and cried with scornful lips, "All hail, King of the Jews!" And to cast on Him the greatest mark of contempt which can be put on man, they foully spat on Him, ON HIM, the Son of the Living God. They struck Him, too; and to abase His royalty to the last degree, they took the reed and smote Him on the head, driving the sharpened thorns into His brow. So to the deepest degradation did these heartless men add most cruel pain.

Who of us can measure the humiliation or realize

the agony thus borne by the Incarnate Son of God at His crowning with thorns? At length the thought had come to Pilate that the enemies of Jesus would be moved with pity now at sight of Him, and would perhaps desist from further torment if he should place before them all the tortured and degraded Jesus. He therefore led Him to a lofty spot, and there, displaying Him in full view of the populace, exclaimed, "Ecce Homo," Behold the Man.

And do you too, my well-beloved, behold the man. For there we see the picture which shows to us the extent of ignominy and degradation to which the sin of pride has brought mankind. Jesus stands there only in our stead. And standing there does penance for us all. The ignominy deserved by us weighs heavily on Him. There we can look and there see the prophet's words fulfilled: "Despised, and the most abject of men . . . surely He hath borne our infirmities and carried our sorrows" (Is. liii. 3, 4). Jesus, true King of heaven and earth, lowers Himself to this; patiently submits to be crowned as a false pretender and jeered at by a scoffing world. And this deep humiliation for our shortcomings. For penance due from us He bore this shame and agony; for us, I say, most wretched men who, in presumptuous pride, would place the crown of God upon the head of man.

To this extent, then, has the fatal sin of pride disrobed man of his proper dignity. And the "Ecce Homo" shows us the true measure of our abasement. "Every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled." Let us often think of this, beloved, when proud or self-satisfied thoughts arise within us. And let us remember that Jesus Christ our Lord and our God has now gained for Himself the very height of exal-

tation, and gained it, too, for us. For we also can be exalted; but, for this, we also must be humbled; must follow Him in His humiliation and in His unquestioning obedience to the divine law. A few words as to this in the second part.

II.

"He that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

He who lowers himself and lives in humility and loving obedience, him doth God exalt here below through grace, and hereafter in heaven's eternal glory. This great exaltation has our Saviour gained for Himself, for His human nature in the first place, and then for all men through His life of humiliation and obedience. For His own human nature first, exalted as that nature is above all creatures in heaven and earth, even unto the very glory of the Father Himself. "He humbled Himself," says the Apostle, "becoming obedient unto death; even to the death of the Cross. For which cause God also hath exalted Him, and hath given Him a name which is above all names. That in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that the Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father" (Philip ii. 8 *et seq.*).

As the second Adam, the second Spiritual Father of the human race, Jesus has gained for us even that which He has gained for Himself. Yet for our attaining this height of exaltation, His example of humility and faithful obedience must be truly followed by us.

Pride and disobedience have brought us into servi-

tude of sin and evil lusts; humility and obedience will put into our hands an all-powerful curb upon these sinful passions and desires. Pride and disobedience have enfeebled us and made us faint; humility and obedience will strengthen us and arm us in temptation. For to the humble man God gives His grace; and he who lives in true obedience and lowliness is invincible, because the power within him is the power of God. Pride and disobedience have brought us into slavery, to bondage unto Satan; humility and obedience will bring to us our freedom as sons of God, and give to us full power to burst the bonds with which Satan binds us. The holy Father, St. Leo, tells us that Our Saviour's mighty victory, whereby He overcame the world and the devil, was begun, continued, and accomplished in humility. So, too, with us in combat with the enemies of our salvation, the attack, the warfare, and the victory must be begun, continued, and perfected in humility.

St. Cyprian speaks of lowliness as being the foundation of all sanctity, and but little learning is needed to tell us he is right. If we are to be converted, it is sincere humility alone that aids us worthily to receive the holy sacrament of penance. The ripened fruit of true humility is contrition, and only the humble man can know himself, repent in truth, and so confess his sins. Where there is no humility there no conversion can be possible. The lowly publican went to his house justified, not so the self-satisfied Pharisee. Is perseverance needed on the way that leadeth unto life? Humility will gain it. A deeply-rooted tree withstands the storms, so steadfast, too, will stand the humble man. Pride stops all progress on the Christian's path, humility it is that helps him on; for

the proud man does God resist, and on the humble one He bestows His grace.

St. Bernard tells us that humility is the very essence of the Christian life, the root of every other virtue. Whoever truly has this virtue of humility, with it owns all others; but without it, no virtue can be had.

There is no faith where there is no humility, nor can there be; for faith requires an humble submission of the intellect unto divine authority. The humble man alone can take to himself the Apostle's admonition in "bringing into captivity every understanding unto the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. x. 5).

The hope of Christians, too, depends upon humility. The lowly man well knows himself; he knows his incapacity, his weakness, and his misery. He knows, in truth, that all reliance is upon God's grace. He feels he can be strong, but only when God strengthens him. And thus in every trial his refuge is in God, and there his confidence.

Christian love is only found allied with lowliness. The humble man knows that from God's bounty his possessions come, all undeserved by him, but only through God's pure love for him. And recognizing this he too loves God. St. Augustine has truly said: "The humble man alone goes on his way in charity."

That love of neighbor has its root in lowliness is likewise plain. For he who is humble does not exalt himself above his fellow-man, nor does he envy him; he is not offended at being less esteemed, nor can he be malicious. He despises no one, but looks with mild forbearance on men's faults, and makes all due allowance for shortcomings.

The humble man is peaceable, humane, and lives his life in amity. Where humility is there too, is pa-

tience, and resignation to the will of God in every state of life; in sorrow, labor, in trial, need, in illness or affliction.

Pure chastity receives support from lowliness, and only then has merit before God. Without her humility, St. Bernard says, the very chastity of Mary would not have had its worth in sight of God.

A willing obedience unto God will always mark the humble man, and also a subjection to his masters and superiors on earth. Obedience and lowliness forever are allied.

All virtues, therefore, have their root and origin in humility. No single one can be possessed without it. Indeed, that which is a virtue in itself, without humility, becomes a vice, and finds no merit in the eyes of God.

You may pray, you may fast, be merciful and chaste, you may practise every virtue that you know, but unless the spirit of humility be there your labor is in vain. With wondrous beauty does St. Gregory speak of lowliness; he says: "The saints of God have built their virtuous lives upon humility; the more saintly their lives, the more humble they were; as trees and branches laden with ripe fruit bend down towards the ground." And where, my well-beloved, have the saints acquired this virtue of humility? Where learned they this? Only in the school of Jesus Christ. Our Saviour's life on earth, at every step, is full of holy teaching for us all. And of humility He plainly said: "Learn of Me, because I am meek and humble of heart: and you shall find rest to your souls" (St. Matt. xi. 29).

If we carefully consider the entire life of Jesus, and mark its incidents, we cannot fail to note His deep

humility, His lowliness, at every stage, from the Manger to the Cross.

And in this Sorrowful Mystery which we are now considering, in this Crowning with Thorns, we find the very acme, as it were, of all possible humiliation.

This Mystery then bears a needed lesson, and brings a touching admonition to us all to live a life of lowliness, to practise humility and obedience.

It surely must astound us to contemplate this; to see the Incarnate Son of God abase Himself so deeply, and take upon Him such profound shame. Why this extremity of humiliation? Because, my brethren, of all vices Pride is king, and sits the deepest in the heart of man. The Son of God must so abase Himself as to be an example for us and an instigation to every kind of humiliation. Whoever, therefore, will not find his own cure in this remedy, indeed is past all healing. For of this St. Bernard says: "It were an unbearable presumption if a worm should raise itself up where the heavenly Majesty has been abased."

Thus may we know from divine teaching, by word and example, the means by which we can obtain true exaltation. Yes, even here on earth we can rise to communion with the divine nature, to the sonship and the friendship of God; and hereafter in heaven to a participation of His eternal bliss and glory. Satan deceived our first parents, most foully lied to them in saying they could be as God by eating the forbidden fruit. In every truth, however, we men are created and redeemed to become as God, perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect, and sharers of His heavenly glory. But this perfection, this exaltation is not gained, as Satan had said, by rebellious disobedience

against God and His holy commands, but only in humble obedience and loving subjection unto Him. The greater our humility and the more faithful our obedience unto God here below, the closer shall be our resemblance unto Him in holiness and all perfections in this life, and in eternal blessedness and glory in the life to come.

In humility and in loving obedience has Mary most resembled her divine Son. Therefore is she in heaven, next to Him, the highest and most blessed.

O gracious Jesus, the holiest of the holy, be Thou forever with us by Thy grace. Teach us to learn of Thee to be truly meek and humble, and forever to find rest for our souls: And do thou, O Blessed Virgin, the lowliest of the lowly, by thy powerful intercession obtain for us this grace. Amen.

SERMON IX.

The Fourth Sorrowful Mystery.

JESUS CARRYING HIS CROSS.

"If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me."—*St. Luke* ix. 23.

Beloved in Christ the Lord:

The subject of this day's sermon is the Fourth Sorrowful Mystery of the holy Rosary.

You will remember that after the scourging of Our Blessed Lord and His crowning with thorns, Pilate conceived the idea of leading Him forth in view of all the people, hoping that the sight of their suffering victim would turn their minds from all desire to increase His torture. Accordingly he displayed the Saviour in His deep humiliation to the populace. These blinded people, far from being moved to pity at the sight, demanded that He should be put to death, crying, "Crucify Him!"

Alas for human malice, blindness, and envy, that it should go to this extent, should even drive all feelings of humanity from the heart!

Pilate knew and acknowledged the innocence of Christ, and yet had not the courage to act on his conviction. A base and worldly fear it was that made him the murderer of God. Weakly yielding to the taunts and threats of Jesus' enemies, he gave Him up into their hands to be put to death. The most dis-

graceful as well as the most painful way of putting men to death was by crucifixion. And only slaves or the lowest criminals were called upon to die on the cross. As far as Pilate and Our Saviour's executioners were concerned, this death sentence was the most unjust deed that could be wrought; but as regards divine justice it fully corresponds to the measure of its offence by sin, and to the weight of guilt for which atonement should be made.

Men had forfeited life by the transgression of our first parents in Paradise. "For in what day soever thou shalt eat of it, thou shalt die." This was the result, foretold by God to Adam, of breaking His command.

Our Saviour Jesus Christ offered Himself to pay the penalty for men's transgression, to suffer the punishment of death. And this He did that man might be redeemed, might live, do penance, and regain the lost life of grace here, and of glory hereafter. Therefore He allowed Himself to be condemned to death. As, however, the transgression of God's commandment is a crossing of the divine will, He would perfect the atonement by dying on the Cross.

The sentence was pronounced, confirmed, and immediate steps were taken for its execution. All the necessary instruments were hurriedly brought to the place. And as Our Divine Redeemer was made to bear the weight of His own Cross, so, too, must we bear ours after Him, every man must shoulder his Cross to become partakers of the fruits of the great Sacrifice. This shall be our consideration in the first place. Next we shall consider the blessed fruits that we may enjoy by the patient carrying of our cross. I continue in the name of Jesus crucified and His sor-

rowful Mother Mary who took with Him the journey of the Cross.

I.

The rude executioners have hastily prepared the Cross on which Our Lord should die, and cast it at His feet. It was a rough, unwieldy instrument; and, alas, very heavy. It is supposed that the upright beam measured about six yards in length; and to this was added the weight of the cross piece, making a heavy load indeed for the strongest man to carry. Yet heavier far than this was the weighty load of sin that Jesus bore together with the wood. To bear all this He brought His tortured, wounded body, suffering from privation, and sadly weakened by ill treatment; and, with patient resignation, He takes the Cross upon His wounded shoulders. Love for His heavenly Father, obedience to His holy will, and infinite love for man enabled Him to embrace that Cross, and regard it as a burden truly precious. St. Thomas of Villanova, in speaking of this, says: "Jesus waited not until the soldiers should lay the Cross upon Him, but, on seeing it, He stooped with joy to raise it to His shoulders, as would a mighty hero."

Yes, with deep thanksgiving, love, and all humility Our Saviour took this heavy, shameful burden on Himself, and offered His great Passion unto God the Father for the salvation of sinful men, salvation from an Everlasting Cross.

As willingly Our Blessed Lord took up this grievous burden, so patiently He carried it to Golgotha; there only ceasing to bear it that it might bear Him.

The contemplation of this holy Mystery will surely

show us all how infinite was the patience of our beloved Lord.

The procession passed through the city of Jerusalem, through streets rough and stony, sometimes sharply ascending and again descending, and the wounded and enfeebled Jesus was the centre of all eyes. The circumstances and surroundings of this journey, added to the burden which He carried, would seem to make Our Saviour's progress nearly impossible. According to Roman custom a trumpeter led the way proclaiming the execution to take place. He was followed by the executioners and their assistants who carried the implements for their bloody work. Then followed the suffering Jesus, bowed down by the weight of His Cross, continually urged to quicker progress by blows and pushes of the rabble, pulling, dragging, cursing, and blaspheming Him. And thus it happened that Our Saviour stumbled on His path, and, bent by His burden, falls heavily to the ground. This seemed but to arouse His tormentors to new and greater cruelties. Enraged at the delay, they seize Our Lord with violent hands, raise Him up, and urge Him on with oaths and curses. And then the suffering Son lifts up His eyes and sees His loved Mother standing by the way. Dear brethren, how sorrowful a meeting was this! He sees the holy Virgin trembling with her grief, sees in her face the look of bitter anguish reflecting the inward suffering of her breaking heart. Measure, if you can, the love she bore for her Divine Son, and then you may conceive of her agony. And yet there was a holy joy to Jesus at this meeting, joy to see Himself so well beloved by His blessed Mother, a love transcending that of all the heavenly host; and with this joy His loving heart was

pierced with pain to think of her grievous sorrows at His Passion. This meeting, therefore, added to the sufferings of Jesus; although He knew that there was one soul that realized the anguish He bore and suffered, too, with Him in her deep sympathy.

Again the fierce tormentors are aroused. No pity comes to them at sight of this sad meeting, but increased rage and hatred, and a desire to hurry on their work. Again they urge the Saviour on with blows; but cease them on seeing that His strength is failing and that He can proceed no farther. These wretched men, then, feared He would expire on the way. Therefore they laid His Cross on Simon of Cyrene, whom they met at this time coming from the country. For as Jesus carried the Cross for man, a man is blessed by helping Him to bear it. In this way they proceed to Golgotha, and come at length to the house of Veronica. This holy woman was touched with profound pity; and, swiftly passing through the crowd, pushed her way to the side of Jesus. To Him she gave her handkerchief that He might wipe the blood and moisture from His face. Further help she could not render Him; but what she could do that she did. How gladdened was the tender heart of Jesus at this proof of loving sympathy! and how well did He reward it by the miracle of leaving the impression of His face on the cloth and returning it to the faithful woman!

You readily will understand, dear friends, from what has been said, that the mental and physical sufferings of Our Saviour on His Way of the Cross were more than human flesh and blood could bear; and He would surely have succumbed had not His Divine nature supported His humanity. All His

sufferings and humiliation evoked no single word of complaint from His lips, but with patient submission were endured. Willingly as He had lifted up His Cross, patiently He persevered in bearing it. For it at length was to lift Him up, and on it He was to redeem mankind.

Simon of Cyrene was coming from the country on his way to the city of Jerusalem. He was compelled to turn and bear the weight of Jesus' Cross. We are led to ask why this was done, and wherefore the Cross was not carried by the executioners themselves. Surely we may see a mysterious dispensation of divine Providence here, and learn a lesson from the incident.

It was given to Simon to carry Our Saviour's Cross that he might become thereby a partaker of the fruits of redemption by the Cross, and thus be saved to life eternal. An old tradition tells us that Simon and his two sons, Alexander and Rufus, embraced the Christian faith, which gracious blessing came to Simon's house from his readiness to bear the Cross. Here, then, is instruction for us, and plain direction in our course, if we would lead true Christian lives and be indeed Christ's followers. Our Blessed Lord has chosen the Cross by which to redeem us, therefore must we take on us the cross if we would be redeemed. He tells us this in the plainest words: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." And again: "Whosoever does not carry his cross and come after me, cannot be my disciple."

What is this cross, my brethren, that we are called upon to carry? It surely is not the Cross of Christ, for none of us, nor all of us, could have the strength to bear it. Yet each one of us must bear the cross,

and the wisdom of God has given to each one his own burden, has weighted the cross for every person according to their strength and need. Thus in life's journey we all shall find crosses offered to us in many different forms. Anything conflicting with our sensual nature, crossing our desires and affections, may become for us a cross. The law of our flesh warring against the law of our spirit makes the Christian's life a very combat, and frames a cross that weighs most heavily upon the soul. The holy Apostle St. Paul felt this burden so weighty a one, that he cried out, "Unhappy man that I am; who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" And then he answers: "The grace of God by Jesus Christ." Yes, it is the grace of God that gives most wondrous strength to the spirit, and enables it to overcome desires of the flesh. But how carefully must the spirit guard and cherish this strength! How diligent in prayer and in the use of every means to nourish it, in order that the conquest over the body may be habitual and complete.

Always should our reason submit itself unto our faith, and our free will unto the divine Law, and this submission should be rendered with cheerful willingness. However, it often happens that an innate pride leads many men into severe temptations, and the combat in this case is a fierce one, the trial most dangerous. Here is needed a strict discipline of the mind by humility and simple obedience. This also is a heavy cross for some to bear; yet bear it always they must. For our discipline of body and mind can never be relaxed; we have entered on a combat which death alone shall end.

Furthermore, there is for every man a vocation, a certain calling given by God, which brings all kinds

of crosses unto him. There are to be endured many vexations, labors, self-denials, and often much ingratitude. These are the common crosses in every-day life, and who of us cannot tell of them? They must be borne, however; must be taken up daily, and willingly carried by him who follows Christ.

At times God sends us illnesses; death enters our home; loss of earthly goods or worldly dishonor comes upon us, and our repute is gone. These are often great crosses that press most heavily upon our shoulders.

Again we shall meet crosses from our fellow-men; some may lay grievous burdens on us from carelessness or ignorance; others, purely from malice.

Still another, O Christian, which may be called your own particular cross; for you lay it upon yourself. I mean those worries, cares, vexations, and sufferings which, by your own imprudence, you bring upon yourself. In many ways you can bring them—by passion, want of thought, neglect of duty, and many others. God would spare you this cross, but in His wisdom He permits it, as it may prove a most salutary experience for you to see your human weaknesses and errors punished by the same.

Thus for each man there is a burden, a daily cross which he must take upon himself to follow Christ. No one is free from this, and none can remain on earth without a cross of some description. Should it happen that our cross weighs so lightly on us that we do not feel it, and we almost seem to be without one, then let us look around upon our fellow-men who may be sorely oppressed by their burdens, and remember that charity obliges us to lend them our assistance.

The Cross of Christ was not properly His own. He

deserved no such grievous burden; but it was the Cross of all the human race that He, from mercy and compassion, took upon Himself. And we must do likewise; that is, must help others to bear their cross. Even though we can do but little for them, as little as did Veronica when giving her handkerchief to Our Blessed Lord; or can we but stand at their side with sympathy and pity, as did the Blessed Virgin and the women of Jerusalem,—still we must do it, as it is a blessed work, and Jesus will accept it as though it were done unto Him.

Another way there is for us to help in carrying the Cross of Jesus, viz., by frequent meditation on Christ's Passion, and by exciting within our hearts pity and compassion for the suffering Saviour. We can often recall to mind that He has borne the Cross for us, and therefore the cross properly was our own. Will not this thought move the heart to deep and grateful love, and fill it with compassion? If not, that heart belongs not to a Christian, or at least to one who is Christian only in name.

In one way or another, then, we must, each one of us, bear a cross. Every day brings new burdens on us, and there is no Christian upon earth who lacks his cross. Not youth nor old age, wealth nor poverty; rank, sex, learning nor piety can prevent the cross from resting on us. And yet, my brethren, this blessed burden, in the hands of the all-wise God, is a precious boon to every Christian. For by the Cross it was the world should be redeemed, and by the Cross it is that we may partake of this redemption.

II.

Beloved in the Lord, the Cross of Jesus Christ is to arouse us sinful men from our sleep, and awaken us to the dangers of our state. From eyes blinded by passion and sin it tears the bandages and lays bare all the evils of a sinful life. It opens to every sinner a full view of the road he is travelling, and shows him its dangers and its fearful end. Happy is he that profits by the view, and with this effusion of God's grace moves himself from off his perilous route.

Sorrows, afflictions, and humiliations, if rightly borne, serve to soften the heart, to make men gentle, lowly, and pious. They cleanse and purify us from our vices; they banish worldliness and vain glory. "Thou hast chastised me, and I was instructed," said the Prophet Jeremias. And how many countless souls have been instructed by their cross and sorrows, and have been moved to live a holy life! There is nothing befalling us that is so powerful to root out vice as crosses and suffering in our life. The holy Apostle St. Peter says: "He that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sins, that now he may live the rest of his time in the flesh, not after the desires of men, but according to the will of God" (I. Pet. iv. 1, 2).

In sorrow and tribulation does man realize his wretchedness, and learn to turn to God for consolation and remission of his sins. The Psalmist said: "In my tribulation have I called upon the Lord." The crosses in our life will also wean us from the world and from all undue attachment to earthly things. They bring before our eyes the day of death, and warn us to be prepared to leave this world. Indeed, if our

path on earth were wholly free from thorns, men would become so enamoured of this life as to lose all sight and thought of life eternal. But our crosses and afflictions here move us to set our hearts on things hereafter.

The divine Wisdom sends us sufferings also that we may do penance for our sins. It is true that God in His mercy forgives our sins for the sake of Our Redeemer's merits, and remits the eternal punishment due the same. Yet the temporal punishment for sin still remains for which we must do penance and suffer here, or in Purgatory.

The greatest proof of divine mercy and favor is to suffer in this life. The pains of Purgatory, on the other hand, display the severity of divine justice. Hence St. Augustine could pray: "O Lord, burn here, cut here; but spare me hereafter." Surely, then, no Christian, who has ever mortally sinned, can complain of tribulations or chastisements in this life.

Moreover, afflictions and sufferings advance us in all virtues; they bring us patience, meekness, and make us rich in merits for eternity. St. Paul writes to the Romans: "We glory also in tribulations: knowing that tribulation worketh patience: and patience trial, and trial hope, and hope confoundeth not" (Rom. v. 3–5).

The cross of suffering borne here on earth likens us to Jesus in His life, and prepares us for full union with Him in His glory. St. Peter bids us rejoice, being partakers of the sufferings of Christ: "That when His glory shall be revealed you may also be glad with exceeding joy" (I. Pet. iv. 13, 14).

Thus we may know that the cross is of great benefit and efficacy to us all in this world. And if we re-

ceive it willingly as Jesus did; if we bear it patiently and perseveringly because God wills it, and as long as God wills it, then we do surely walk the path that leadeth to eternal life. "O happy soul," cried St. Teresa, "that is ready to help Thee, O Jesus, to bear Thy Cross, and not leave Thee to carry it alone." The soul that truly feels this desire has nothing to cause her fear or anxiety.

In the exercise of patience in carrying our cross there are several steps that must be taken before it is perfected.

If you bear your burden resignedly, no matter what its form may be; if you complain not against God and His dispensations, but restrain all signs of impatience, both in word and mien, and bear a quiet and composed demeanor with your neighbors, then you have taken well the first step in patience. And although you may weep bitterly over your suffering at times, and seek what comfort you can gain; although you may speak often to your neighbor of your sorrow, yet without bitterness or despair; still you may be said to bear your cross with patience. You may even pray to God for relief or suspension of your trouble, but always end your prayer in our Saviour's words: "Not my will, O Lord, but Thine be done."

The second step is reached when you are disposed to bear with resignation as many and as great sufferings as God may please to send you, leaving yourself entirely and unconditionally in the hands of His providence.

The third and highest step in patience you will have reached when you rejoice at tribulations and sufferings that befall you, and account them, for what in truth they are, loving favors from God. In this way did

the holy Apostles view afflictions, rejoicing to suffer shame and sorrow for the sake of Christ. And all the saints of God have been accustomed to share this disposition. The daily prayer of St. Teresa was: "O Lord, let me suffer or die." She held her life to be undesirable without suffering.

These last two steps are not indeed commanded us, but are enjoined as counsels. They are, however, necessary for those who wish to follow Christ and to make progress in the spiritual life. For the true way to Christian perfection is the way of the Cross.

A constant murmuring and impatience under suffering have always been considered by the saints as a very evil sign. St. Cyprian has said: "What heavy guilt rests on a Christian that he, a servant, will not endure, when the Master has suffered before him; that he will not suffer for his own sins, when He Who was sinless suffered for him! The Son of God has suffered to make us children of God, and we refuse to suffer that we may remain His children."

St. Laurentius says: "To be unwilling to suffer is an indication of an uncontrolled, unloving heart; to murmur at the blows of affliction is the sign of a rejected soul. Yes, my brethren, any one refusing his penance belongs among the rejected ones as long as he remains in this condition. One of the first requirements of a spiritual Christian life is to accept the cross from God's hands willingly, and bear it with patient perseverance.

All saints that ever lived have been won to God by the school of the Cross; in it they were trained up and educated, and through it, purified and crowned. The love for suffering and the Cross is the best, indeed the only indication and measure of our love for God.

If you would truly test your love for Christ the Lord, take up your cross and try if you will carry it patiently and perseveringly. If you would truly measure how great your love is, see with how much affection you regard suffering for Him.

Let us then strive with all our might to follow the example of the holy saints and of the sorrowful Mother on the way of the Cross, whither our Blessed Lord Himself invites us: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me."

If we thus suffer with Christ, with Him we shall also be glorified. The more patience and loving trust in God we possess here, the more glorious with Him shall be our crown hereafter.

O sorrowful and holy Mother, be with us thy children on our way of the cross, as thou wast with thine own divine Son. Obtain for us the grace to take our cross with cheerful resignation from God's hand, and bear it with patient perseverance to the end: to follow Jesus in His sufferings through life, and by the cross be raised to Him in death. Amen.

SERMON X.

The Fifth Sorrowful Mystery.

THE CRUCIFIXION.

"Jesus said: It is consummated. And bowing His head, He gave up the ghost."—*St. John* xix. 30.

Beloved in Christ the Lord:

The death on the Cross of Our Divine Redeemer closes the series of Sorrowful Mysteries of the holy Rosary. To that event we have to turn our thoughts in to-day's sermon.

Our Blessed Lord and Saviour Himself has borne the Cross on which He was to shed His Blood. As typified by Isaac many centuries before, He has carried the wood of sacrifice unto the mount ordained of God. And now, at length, He has arrived at Calvary. The wood lies at His feet; it is the Cross. The time for His great sacrifice is at hand. The executioners, with violent haste, pull and tear the garments from His body in order that they may more easily accomplish their work of nailing that sacred body to the Cross. The Son of God is then thrown down by the tormentors, His body laid upon the wood and stretched and drawn till all His bones can be numbered. The heavy nails are driven through His hands and feet. An awful silence has succeeded the late din and turmoil, and the sharp blows of the hammer break with terrible distinctness on the death-like stillness of the air,

Plainly, too, is heard the stretching and snapping of His bones and sinews, and the heart-breaking sighs of the Divine Sufferer. The blood flows streaming from His wounds and dyes the Cross and the ground about it. At last the Lamb of sacrifice is raised up with the Cross, and the world's Redeemer hangs suspended between heaven and earth.

Let us, my brethren, now look on Jesus crucified for us, and let us consider the great work thus consummated on the Cross. Three weary hours our Saviour hangs there in great suffering. The sun has withdrawn its light, and casts the darkness of a mourning veil upon the earth. At the hour of His death the ground is seized with sudden tremblings, the firmest rocks are torn asunder, and the Temple's veil is rended in two parts from top to bottom; the graves are opened, and many bodies of the saints arise and walk upon the earth. Surely these wondrous events betoken that on the Cross a work was wrought of great concern to heaven and earth alike: a work of which the dying Lord exclaimed, "It is finished."

What it is that Jesus by His death has accomplished, shall be our first subject of consideration today. Our second, what we must do to obtain a share in that work consummated upon the Cross of Calvary.

I continue in the name of Jesus crucified, and of Mary at the foot of His Cross.

I.

With His expiring breath Our Blessed Redeemer from His Cross cried out: "It is consummated." This is a word of very great significance; for truly infinite things have been consummated with Jesus' death,

In the first place, it brought an end to His bitter Passion; by it His agony was finished—an agony so great that neither men nor angels can measure it. A faint idea of His mighty anguish of soul and body can be gained from those words of His unto His heavenly Father: "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" But now, the sense of desolation, the sufferings, and anguish are drawing to an end, and it is with relief and gratitude to His Father that He exclaims, "It is consummated."

Then, with His death, our Divine Redeemer has finished His great atonement, and has made His offering unto God the Father on behalf of a sin-stained world. At the moment of His speaking these words, full expiation was made for the sins of all the world, and it was reconciled to God.

In Pilate's judgment-hall the Jews cried out, "Away with Him," "Let Him be crucified;" and we know well why they raised this cry. They wished to bring Our Saviour to the most painful and degrading mode of death, and that was death on the Cross. Divine justice, however, demanded this same form of death from the world's Redeemer, the Incarnate Son of God. For only by this death could a full atonement be made for the sins of the world. By sin, original and actual, men had forfeited life and deserved death, the wages of sin. God has warned our first parents of the inevitable result of breaking His commandment, He plainly told them of the consequences of eating the forbidden fruit: "For in what day soever thou shalt eat of it thou shalt die." By the transgression of God's command men lost at once the life of grace within their soul, and brought on their body death on earth and eternal condemnation hereafter: this the Holy Scrip-

ture calls the "second death." The only begotten Son of God the Father undertook to make atonement, and therefore He must bear the punishment for sin, that is death. As, however, the essence of sin consists in this, that man by abuse of his free-will crosses the divine will, and as this abuse has its origin in pride and disobedience, the Redeemer must atone for sin by the most shameful and most humiliating death, must be obedient even to the death upon the Cross. Then does the expiation rendered fully meet the satisfaction required for the guilt of sin. "For why did Christ, when as yet we were weak, according to the time, die for the ungodly?" (Rom. v. 6). "Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible gold or silver, from your vain conversation of the tradition of your fathers: but with the Precious Blood of Christ, as of a lamb unspotted and undefiled" (I. Pet. i. 18, 19). It is not to be thought that Christ has shed His blood for the elect alone, or made atonement only for them; no, my brethren, the glorious work was wrought for all mankind: "He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world" (I. John ii. 2). O wondrous and unfathomable goodness! Our Redemption—mine, yours, and all the world's—is wrought and consummated on the Cross; a justly offended God is reconciled to man. How full of meaning, then, is that first word spoken by Christ from His Cross: "Father, forgive them."

"It is consummated." Ended forever is our thraldom to Satan's yoke of bondage, and we are freed from servitude to him. Before His Passion, Our Lord spake openly with His disciples of His own death. He said: "Now is the judgment of the world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out" (St. John

xii. 31). And, after the death of Christ, St. Paul wrote: "That, through death, he might destroy him who had the empire of death, that is the devil: and might deliver them who through the fear of death were all their life-time subject to servitude" (Heb. ii. 14, 15). Hence our freedom is derived from Jesus' Cross. And he alone is really free whom Christ hath liberated. For on the Cross of Calvary true liberty was born.

Certain it is that power of beguiling men was left to Satan. Even after the conquest of the Cross he still remained the powerful enemy, and often the conqueror, of men. But by the Cross his power was so far broken that only those need be overcome by him who wish to be enslaved. Only the coward who will not fight or the man without a conscience can be conquered by the devil.

When the fetters of this servitude were broken we were also freed from condemnation to eternal death. "For there is now no condemnation to them which are in Christ." To those believing in Christ Jesus, who are converted and fully repentant, Heaven stands open forevermore. Our Lord Himself proclaimed this from the Cross, when saying to the penitent thief, "Amen, I say to thee, this day thou shalt be with me in Paradise."

"It is consummated." In place of that paradise lost to men by sin, Christ has opened for all a new paradise, a realm of everlasting bliss, to be attained by those who make themselves partakers of the fruits of His sacrifice. This new paradise and everlasting realm is the Church of Christ. The holy Fathers say, "The Church came forth from the opened side of Our Redeemer as He fell asleep in death, even as Eve

came forth from the side of the sleeping Adam. St. Augustine says, "Adam sleeps that Eve may be created, Christ dies that the Church may exist. While Adam sleeps Eve comes forth from his side; the side of Christ sleeping in death is opened with a lance that the holy sacraments may flow forth, through which the Church takes life and nourishment." The holy Church is God's new kingdom upon earth. Her foundation was laid in paradise. She is the new paradise, whose gates were opened wide to all by Jesus Christ, and she is the Mother of all children born anew by grace.

Christ lives in the Church unto the end of the world. He is her invisible Head, and rules as king by God the Holy Ghost. He rules and guides her visibly by His representatives on earth, of whom the Head is His Vicar on the Papal throne. Through the Church He will impart to all men, rightly disposed, the blessed fruits of His redemption—truth, grace, and life eternal. He will make known to them the truths which He Himself has taught, and which He charged His Church to teach to all men and all ages.

He will impart all graces needed to attain eternal life, which, by His Passion and death, He has gained for all. He will bestow eternal life on all those who believe in Him, and live according to this belief. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." In the Church, therefore, Jesus Christ doth live and act for the glory of God and the salvation of men.

"It is consummated." When Our Saviour died on the Cross the human race became spiritually renewed and regenerated. Then men became children of God and brethren of Jesus Christ. As brothers of Christ we also became children of Mary. Therefore did

Jesus from the Cross direct one of our race to regard the blessed Virgin as a Mother, and her to look on him as son. "Behold thy son," said Jesus from His Cross to Mary standing by, and He pointed to St. John, who stood beside her. The holy Fathers teach us that St. John stood here in place of all who are regenerate.

"Behold thy mother," said He to His disciple, pointing to Mary. What a gracious and magnificent bequest was this! He wills and bequeaths to us His brethren that love for Him which filled His blessed Mother's heart. He also pours into her maternal hands the treasure of all mercies, that she may share the same with a mother's love among her children. Oh yes, my brethren, let us "Behold our mother." Let us behold on Calvary the new family, the new parents of the new covenant. The second father Adam, Jesus on the Cross; the second mother Eve, Holy Mary; and the son of grace, St. John.

"It is consummated." On the Cross of Calvary God has given the highest proofs of the culpability of sin, and of His own infinite divine justice. If this be done unto the "green wood," well may we ask, "what shall be done to the dry?" But at the same time He has given abundant proof of His infinite love for man; and meditating on this wondrous love, thus speaks St. Bernard: "Dearest Jesus, what art Thou doing? We ought to die, and dost Thou take death upon Thyself? We have sinned, and wilt Thou do penance? O goodness unparalleled and love unbounded!"

Indeed, we too must say, O love unmeasured! Had our blessed Lord suffered death on the Cross for righteous men, for friends, such wondrous love could scarce be understood by us. But when we consider

that He, the Son of God, died for a sinful and degraded race, for His enemies, His very murderers, even our cold hearts must be warmed by the fire of such a love. It was the power of this great love to which our Lord alluded when he said that if He were lifted up He would draw all men unto Him. He meant thereby that the love for men which He displayed on His cross would prove all-powerful in attracting hearts to Him; that is, those hearts that have a feeling for divine love would be touched by considering His sacrifice, and won to faith and love.

He also manifested the greatness of His insatiable love when He exclaimed, "I thirst!" "I thirst," He would say, for your souls. Are we not one and all attracted by this wondrous love of God for us? If not, our hearts must surely be harder than the rocks which rent asunder at the death of Jesus. Can we wonder, then, at the words of the apostle, "If any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema"?

Now all these things that we have briefly touched upon were in the mind of Jesus when He cried "It is consummated." Yes, my beloved, all is finished. At Golgotha full satisfaction was rendered for our sins and those of all the world. At Golgotha a new paradise was opened unto us, planted with all the gracious fruits that nourish us for eternal life in heaven. The holy Church was given us, the teacher of divine truth, the dispenser of heavenly blessings, and the guide to life eternal. The Mother of Jesus there was willed to us as our Mother, and was made a treasurer of graces.

Thus is Calvary the very garden and home of grace, from which salvation of the world comes forth. The Cross of Jesus is the centre of the world, the pivot of

all ages' history. The old covenant pointed to the sacrifice on Calvary, and under that dispensation faithful souls found salvation in their faith in the Redeemer to come. The new covenant came, supplanted the old, and points the faithful to the Cross where they may seek and find their souls' salvation. Truly, then all was consummated, everything fulfilled and perfected. All that had been predicted by the prophets was accomplished; all types and symbols of the great sacrifice fulfilled; and the great work of redemption, long pointed out by the old covenant, was finished.

Then Jesus Christ, who came forth from the Father, discharged in full the work He had been given to do, and now He could return unto his Father. Then was the veil of the Jewish Temple rended; the old covenant then ceased, the new began; and the sanctuary of the Lord was opened wide forever to men of every race and clime and age.

What must be done by us to partake of these blessed fruits of Jesus' sacrifice is now briefly to be considered.

II.

"The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (St. Luke xix. 10). Christ died for all men. He redeemed all. He gained for all the grace for their salvation, and opened to all the gates of heavenly glory. How is it, then, well may you ask, that all men are not saved; nay, that many are condemned? Your best answer is found in the words of the holy Council of Trent hereon: "Although Christ has died for all, yet not all obtain the benefit of His death, but only those to whom the merit of His Passion is imparted."

In order to be partakers of Christ's merits, we must of course ourselves coöperate with Him. The abundant merits of His Passion and death are sure means of salvation for all men; but if a share of them be not acquired by us, they avail us not. The most healing and efficacious medicine is useful to a sick man only if it is used by him, and the directions regarding it observed. And although Christ's Passion and death form an inexhaustible source of every grace, yet if we draw not therefrom, it is as useless to us as is a clear spring of sparkling water to the thirsty wanderer who will not stoop to bring it to his lips.

St. Augustine has said, "God created us without ourselves, but serves us not without us."

And so we are brought face to face with a question of the greatest moment to us all. "How are we to coöperate with God, that our Saviour's merits may be imparted to us, that we may gain eternal life?" Surely this is a matter for our careful consideration, yet the answer may be easily obtained by all.

The first requirement from us for our salvation is faith. That is, belief in all that God has revealed, as taught and presented to us by His Holy Church. "Faith," said St. Chrysostom, is "the foundation of religion." Faith teaches us to know God; teaches us to know our own destination, and the way by which it is to be attained. Faith makes us sharers in the knowledge of God Himself. It is the foundation of all virtues and all good works. It is faith that disposes a man to be a Christian, and opens his way of entrance to the Church, and to all her channels of divine grace that Christ hath wrought in her. "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be condemned" (St. Mark

xvi. 16). These weighty words were spoken by Our Lord Himself.

Therefore, in order to gain salvation we must with firm and unyielding faith believe all truths revealed by God.

But faith alone, or bare belief, is not of itself sufficient to gain us this salvation. The traveller may know full well and believe that his journey's end is near, but if he rests with this, and takes no step to reach that end, he never can attain it. Thus shall it be with us in reaching heaven, our journey's end. We never shall gain it unless we step with firm and certain tread along the direct road. The right and direct road is that marked out for us by the commandments of God and the Church. He who does not walk this way can never hope to reach the goal, the heavenly glory that terminates the journey. Hence our Saviour bids us all who wish to enter into life, to keep the commandments. And St. James says, "As the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead" (ii. 26).

According to the doctrine of the Apostle St. Paul, our faith, to be efficacious, must be a living, loving faith; that is, it must work by love, being fruitful in good works. God's commandments are the expression of divine will regarding us, which will is holy, just, and maketh righteous those who follow it. Would you know the full meaning of "being holy"? It is nothing else than to love God above all things, and our neighbor as ourself. This is the sum and the fulfilment of all the commandments of God and of the Church. Love is the complement of the Law; and, in the words of St. Paul, "Charity is patient, is kind; charity envieth not, dealeth not perversely, is not

puffed up, . . . beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things" (I. Cor. xiii. 4, 7). Thus speaks the apostle of the glorious virtue of charity, which is love.

By the faithful observance of God's commandments our will becomes conformed to the divine will, and we may grow in holiness as God is holy. This holiness it is which is a condition of our salvation, and is indeed the surest pledge of it.

Knowing then, dear brethren, that we are able, by aid of divine grace, to observe and keep the commandments as required for our salvation, there is yet a third condition to be observed in striving for our destined end. This is to make diligent use of the means of grace which God provides for us. We all must know these means to be the holy sacraments and prayer. "Without Me," says our Lord, "you can do nothing," "Without my assistance," He would say to us, "without the grace that I have gained for you, and am ready to give to you, you can do nothing towards your own salvation." Yes, it is from God that the will comes, as does the power to do.

God had given the children of Israel a comforting assurance by the mouth of the prophet Ezechiel: "I will put a new spirit in their bowels, . . . that they may walk in My commandments, and keep my judgments, and do them." What there was promised Christ doth now fulfil with every one who makes use of His means of grace; that is, the worthy and frequent enjoyment of the sacraments, and humble, earnest, and unceasing prayer. For by these means we participate in the mighty power of God. Hence we too can say with the apostle, "I can do all things in Him who strengtheneth me" (Phil. iv. 13). If, then,

God does demand from us obedience to His commandments, He asks for nothing impossible for us to render. The holy Council of Trent says that He will have us to do everything in our power, to pray for what we are unable to accomplish, and therein He will help and strengthen us.

Accordingly, these things must be done by us to gain a share in our Redeemer's merits: we must believe all truths revealed by God and taught us by the holy Church; we must live in obedience to His commandments; and, lastly, that we may be enabled to do so, we must often and worthily receive the holy sacraments, and be diligent in prayer.

Faith shows us God and eternal life with him. The divine commandments point us to our way. Grace leads us gently on this way, and strengthens us to persevere to our journey's glorious end. Let us but strive to serve God faithfully in life, then we shall die a blessed death, and live forever in His glory hereafter.

Jesus Christ, by dying on the Cross for us, has truly made us free, and yet He has not liberated us from the sorrows and afflictions of this life. Suffering and tribulations yet remain for men, but Christ has sanctified affliction of all kinds and made them meritorious works for eternity. Temporal death also does yet await us all, but from it Christ has taken the sting, the terrors, and made it a transition to a blessed eternal life.

Even as Jesus suffered, so too we must suffer; and if with Him we suffer patiently, with him we shall be crowned gloriously.

Even as Jesus died and laid His body in the sepulchre, so we must die and our bodies must rest in the

grave; but through His death and burial He has poured the blessing of eternal life upon death and the grave for us. If we die in Christ, we shall also rise with Him; and then we regain all, through the second Adam, which had been lost by the first.

Shall we not therefore rejoice in our faith, and cling to it in life and death? And shall we not strive with all our might to walk the path of the divine Law, the only way that leads us heavenward? Let us ever remember that we, who of ourselves can accomplish nothing good, in Christ may find the power to do all things; and that by zealous use of the holy sacraments and of prayer we may obtain this grace and strength of which we are in so great need.

Very tenderly also let us venerate the sorrowful mother of Our Redeemer; remember her mother's love for us, and her holy office as treasurer of divine grace. She ever is the sinner's refuge, the help of Christians in life and in death. Indeed a true devotion to the Blessed Virgin is a powerful means for the Christian to live well and to die a holy death. St. Alphonsus says, "On the day that Mary had the grief and joy to stand by the Cross of her Son, the chief of God's elect, God gave to her the grace to be present at the death of all called unto eternal life."

If we, my brethren, will observe these things as necessary for our salvation; if we coöperate with God's grace in doing them, then at our death we may with confidence exclaim with Christ, "It is consummated." Yes, then for us is life's task finished, the battle is fought, the journey ended, and henceforth the crown of glory is ours. Confidently may we say, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit."

All praise and thanks we yield to Thee, O Jesus, for

the blessing of redemption, for Thy bitter Passion and Thy cruel death. Be ever with us that we may live and die in Thee. And we beg of thee, O sorrowful Mother, pray for us sinners now and in the hour of our death. Amen.

SERMON XI.

The First Glorious Mystery.

THE RESURRECTION.

"And as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive."—1 *Cor.* xv. 22.

Beloved in Christ the Lord:

We have already devoted a series of five sermons each, to the contemplation of the Joyful and the Sorrowful Mysteries of the holy Rosary. In the Five Joyful Mysteries we have seen the foundation, and in the Five Sorrowful the execution of the mysterious work of our redemption. From them we have endeavored to draw practical lessons for our moral and religious welfare. We have now to consider the Glorious Mysteries, containing, as they do, the blessed results or fruits of redemption. Turn your attention then with me to the contemplation of these wondrous events, and to-day to the mighty Resurrection of our Lord, the First Glorious Mystery.

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, lowered Himself to become man, but infinitely exalted us to become children of God.

He suffered for us and died upon the Cross, that He might reconcile us to our heavenly Father. His sacred body was given to the grave, but the grave could not retain the Holy One.

The greatest prophet of the ancient covenant had

said: "His sepulchre shall be glorious" (Is. xi. 10). And the Royal Psalmist speaks of the Redeemer in these words: "Moreover my flesh also shall rest in hope: because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; nor wilt thou give thy Holy One to see corruption" (Ps. xv. 10, 11).

Glorious indeed the grave of Christ became, and no corruption approached the Holy One. As He foretold to His disciples, on the third day He burst the bonds of death, and rose again to life eternal.

Jesus gave Himself willingly to death. He voluntarily laid down His life, and by His own power He received His life again. And thus He has made known to us His mastery of life and death. Thus He has proven Himself to be both man and God, and clearly shown His power and title to be the world's Redeemer.

By His death He has conquered the death of sin, and by His Resurrection has bestowed on men a new life—the life that cometh from God. In the words of the Preface proper to Easter Day: "Who by dying destroyed our death, and rising again restored our life."

Therefore, the Resurrection is, as it were, the seal of Christ's redeeming work, and at the same time the first-fruits of redemption. The resurrection of our soul from the sepulchre of sin, the rising to a life of grace in Christ, is the first-fruit borne to us here on earth; and the resurrection of our body and its reunion with the soul, the blessed fruit hereafter.

In the first part of to-day's discourse we shall speak of the soul's resurrection; and in the second, of the rising of the body to immortality at the general Resurrection on the Last Day.

Let us give our full attention to these all-important truths, and may the Risen Saviour grant us grace so to do. I continue in the name of Jesus and His glorious Mother Mary.

I.

"As in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive."

From Adam, our first father, we have received our human nature, our material life; and from him all men have inherited death and mortality of the body. From Christ, our second father, we have received a new life of grace for the soul, also a new material life to be received at the general resurrection. By His Death and Resurrection Jesus Christ has gained for us these blessings. And the new life for soul and body is the first and greatest fruit of Christ's redeeming work.

The new spiritual existence or life of the soul is, however, a supernatural life. Man becomes thereby a child of God. This life he can receive only by a new birth, a miraculous spiritual regeneration which has its origin in God. He becomes a child of God when made partaker of God's divine nature, and thus possesses the true belongings of God's children.

To this new life in God and Jesus Christ each man is born in Holy Baptism. Then he is spiritually regenerated, and rises from the tomb of sin unto the life of grace, and sonship unto God. This regeneration and spiritual resurrection is presented to us in a most marked manner by the mode of administering the sacrament of Baptism in early ages.

The child was plunged into the baptismal water, then rose, or was lifted out therefrom. This immersion was well taken to signify the death and burial of

the sinful or "old" man at Baptism; and the rising from the water, his regeneration or spiritual resurrection to the life of grace.

The "old" man, descended from our father Adam, dies in holy Baptism; the new man, born of God, renewed in God to holiness, arises. The Apostle speaks of this in these words: "For we are buried together with Him by baptism into death: that as Christ is risen from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also may walk in newness of life" (Rom. vi. 4).

Through Baptism, man is made partaker of Christ's nature, and is renewed to the image of God, so that the Apostle could say to the Galatians: "For as many of you as have been baptized in Christ, have put on Christ" (Gal. iii. 27).

Through Baptism, man is, in a supernatural manner, closely united to Christ, so that he lives in Christ, and Christ in him. By reason of this intimate union all graces of salvation are communicated to the child of God. And Our Lord Himself has compared the same to that union of the living grape with the parent vine. As the vine pours forth its sap into the fruit, thereby imparting to it its own life, so does Christ pour forth His Spirit into the soul of the baptized, and imparts the life of grace and sonship unto God.

Oh that all men would grasp the fact of this wondrous truth, would realize the great and glorious mystery of man's union with God, and the grace that flows into the soul by holy Baptism. Does it not manifest to us the greatness and the dignity of man, and tell us of our own exalted destination? Yes, by this union we are related to God, we are adopted sons of God. And herein lies the essence of all graces and right of inheritance to all heavenly gifts. This union

with Christ exalts man far above all earthly greatness, and as far beyond all human dignity as heaven is above the earth. The grace that flows from this gives to the soul such supernatural value and beauty that, as said by St. Peter of Alcantara: "No tongue is able to tell the measure of love that Jesus bears for every soul being in a state of grace."

Consider, therefore, your exalted state, my brethren. Consider that by our regeneration and spiritual resurrection we have become partakers of the divine nature, we have become God's children and members of the body mystical of Christ; realize all this, and surely our life must correspond to such wondrous greatness, dignity, and grace.

Life is motion, activity, and efficiency. To live as a Christian, therefore, does not consist in acting on the principles and according to the spirit of this world, nor the following of lusts of the flesh. Indeed, no: in the Christian's life there must be a constant warfare against the world and all evil lusts.

To live as a Christian one must live by Christ's example, and ever strive to imitate his elder brother; for He became man to make us children of God, and to show us by His example how a child of God should live on earth in order to attain his home in heaven. The Christian's life must be such as accords with the doctrines and principles of faith. "By faith the righteous man does live," says the Apostle. That is, his whole existence is by faith. The righteous life is founded upon faith, guided in all its ways by faith, and receives support and nourishment by faith. And this the life of all true Christians will be until the light of glory breaks upon them, and the full vision of the reality supplies the place of faith.

The life of the Christian is also one of hope. For his faith has taught him that he is created not only for these few years of earthly life, but for an eternal existence full of joy and peace in heaven, high above all the stars in the mansions of His heavenly Father, in the company of God's elect. Faith tells him that Christ has opened the doors of this heavenly home for him and all who may choose to enter. Upon this faith rests the Christian's hope. He earnestly desires to reach his home, and trustfully and patiently awaits the fulfilment of the divine promise. This longing to be with God and this quiet confidence give to the Christian mind a heavenly peace, so that although he lives and walks amid this world's distractions, yet his thoughts are raised on High, and his true life is in Heaven. He walks the path, marked out by the Apostle, in newness of life. His thoughts forever dwell on things above, where Christ the Lord resides in all His glory.

Again, the Christian life is one of love. Inflamed by love divine the Christian's heart is wholly given to God. He seeks to know and do the divine will in all things, and his chief pleasure is to please his God.

Love urges him to keep the commandments, the holy laws of God and of the Church; and thus it is for him the bond of true perfection, the motive for his practising all virtues. To love God above all things and our neighbor as ourself is indeed true righteousness and holiness.

Let us, therefore, live in faith. Let this faith bring forth the fruits of hope and love. And let these three virtues abide with us till death. Then faith will end in sight, hope in possession, and love for evermore re-

main; love perfected, love unalloyed, and blessed forever in the possession of its greatest treasure.

Thus is the life of grace on earth the condition for a life of glory in heaven, and the only path whereby to reach that glory. Those who would realize this must surely strive to guard and increase God's grace within them. It is not enough for us to have entered on a life of grace; it is not enough to have found ourselves upon the path that leads to heaven; we must persevere in that life, and stand steadfast on that path until the end. "Knowing that Christ rising again from the dead, dieth now no more." Thus writes St. Paul. And the rising of Christ must be our example in rising from sin: that is, after once being risen from the death of sin, we shall die to it no more, but ever live with Christ in newness of life. Holy Scripture tells us of others, brought back from death to life, besides Our Blessed Saviour. Lazarus, Jairus' daughter, the widow's son, all were restored to life; yet far different was their resurrection from that of Christ.

They were raised from the dead indeed, but raised to die again. Christ rose to die no more; and this shall be our resurrection. We shall be raised up with Christ, with Him to die no more.

Hast thou preserved, O Christian, thy baptismal grace? Then by God's mercy thou dost possess the most precious jewel, the treasure beyond all price. Keep carefully what thou hast, and let no power on earth deprive thee of this gem.

Hast thou, by mortal sin, lost this treasure? Then be instant in regaining the life of grace, in finding again the lost path. Hast thou fallen back again and yet again from grace into the death of sin? Then rise

again, and rise with Christ to die no more. God's mercy has provided a holy ladder for the fallen, the sacrament of penance.

The holy fathers call this sacrament a "second Baptism," yet one "most difficult." And truly it is attended with much difficulty. It calls for the exercise of man's full will-power combined with the grace of God.

Hast thou sinned like St. Peter? Then like St. Peter rise; like him stand firm as a rock, yet ever weeping for his fall.

Hast thou sinned as did St. Mary Magdalene? Then, like that humble penitent, arise, remain ever faithful unto Jesus, and love Him intensely as she did.

Hast thou sinned as did the publicans Matthew and Zacheus? Be thou converted as they were, and make reparation such as theirs. Strive, then, ever to preserve the grace regained, rise to a life of holiness and persevere therein, and confidently hope for the crown of life eternal.

By His Resurrection Our Blessed Lord has not only raised the soul from the grave of sin unto the life of grace; but He has also raised up the body to immortality, and this is now to be considered in our second part.

II.

As originally created, man was made by God immortal. Thus we may read in the Book of Wisdom. And although by nature man's body is mortal, and shares not the soul's immortality, yet had he remained sinless man's body would, by grace, have become immortal.

But for Adam's sin, himself and his descendants would have been translated, body and soul, from earth to heaven in a manner wholly incomprehensible to us. The law that every man should die was brought into the world by sin. Death is the penalty and consequence thereof. "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into this world, and by sin death, and so death passed upon all men, in whom all have sinned" (Rom. v. 12). Our Saviour Jesus Christ has, however, atoned for sins by His death, and has regained for us the lost immortality of the body. "As in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive" (I. Cor. xv. 22).

Yes, my brethren, we shall all, one day, arise from the dead as surely as Christ is risen. By one man death has come to us, and by one is life restored. At His Resurrection Christ has given to His own human nature, to His own body, the immortality which it had not before possessed.

In Him the whole human race arises, as in Adam it was subjected to death. Our resurrection, however, shall not take place until the last great day, at the time of the general Resurrection. The same divine Omnipotence who formed man's body from the dust, and gave to him a living soul, can and will also reform that body and rejoin it to the soul for an eternal life. Man's very nature demands the reunion of body and soul; for their separation is wholly unnatural. Body and soul are needed to form the whole man. We know that what is contrary to nature cannot last forever; therefore, man's soul cannot forever exist without his body. Divine justice also requires such a reunion in the future life; for body and soul together on earth have done their good and evil deeds, there-

fore justice demands that together they receive reward or punishment.

Accordingly, all men shall rise, as Our Blessed Lord Himself has told us: those that have done good shall rise to life eternal, those that have done evil to condemnation. The souls of the righteous earnestly long for this reunion, as their happiness will be perfect only when it has taken place.

By the design and plan of God in the creation the body's resurrection and reunion with the soul is demanded. Creation attains its consummation only in man. The material and spiritual world by the body and the soul are united in man.

If these two parts, of which man essentially consists, were not reunited in eternity, he would surely appear a mutilated being, existing in a condition opposed to his destiny. All harmony of creation would seem destroyed, and a creature wholly incomplete would be presented to the view of the blessed company of heaven.

Then with body and soul reunited we all shall rise; with the same body possessed by us on earth. In eternity we shall still be men, and therefore shall consist of soul and body. As Christ rose from the dead in the same body which He had before possessed, so we shall rise in our own bodies. "For I know that my Redeemer liveth; and in the last day I shall rise out of the earth: and I shall be clothed again with my skin, and in my flesh I shall see my God, Whom I myself shall see, and my eyes shall behold and not another" (Job xix. 25–27).

The souls of all men thus will be clothed with the same bodies to which on earth they were united. Everything belonging to the nature of this body will

be given back to it at the Resurrection. All imperfections, defects, and all deformities then will be supplied; all blemishes and infirmities removed, and a body complete and perfected will rise. And although it is certain that this same body we now have will rise, yet it will be in some respects different after the Resurrection. For the body of Christ in which He rose was indeed the same as the one in which He lived on earth, but was possessed of many different properties, and was in a manner transfigured.

As to the form and appearance that the body shall present, many of you no doubt will like to have distinct and positive information. Such knowledge is conveyed to us by revelation from God Himself, and therefore is possessed with divine certainty. The general opinion is, that bodies will rise in a condition corresponding to that of the soul to which they are to be reunited. That is to say, the bodies of souls condemned will rise in a hideous form and present a terrible appearance, so that they prove an everlasting shame and torment to the soul. On the other hand, the bodies of the just will come forth from the grave in a glorified and transfigured state, giving eternal glory and happiness to the soul. For the Holy Scriptures tell us that the souls of the just will be like unto Christ. The Apostle also tells us that "Christ is risen from the dead, the first-fruits of them that sleep" (1 Cor. xv. 20). And likewise, that they who follow Him in life will hereafter be like unto Him. "We look for the Saviour, Our Lord Jesus Christ, who will reform the body of our lowness, made like to the body of His glory" (Philip. iii. 20, 21). Again, "As we have borne the image of the earthly, let us bear also the image of the heavenly" (1 Cor. xv. 49).

There are four qualities, especially noteworthy, that shall be possessed by the risen bodies of the righteous. These are, impassibility, or freedom from suffering; splendor, or the glory of the soul shining forth in the body; subtlety, or the power of passing through obstacles; and agility, or the power of moving and acting at the spirit's will.

As Christ after His Resurrection dieth no more, so shall the righteous be free from any thought of suffering or death. "And death shall be no more, nor mourning, nor crying, nor sorrow shall be any more" (Apoc. xxi. 4).

Their bodies shall have splendor, for "they shall shine as the sun in their Father's kingdom;" heavenly glory shall be poured upon them; and they shall be as Jesus at the scene of His transfiguration on earth, and as He appears forever in heaven.

The bodies of the just shall have subtlety; for although the transfigured body retains its form, yet it shall have the power of penetrating space and other bodies—as the risen Saviour could penetrate the doors of the room where His disciples were assembled.

Finally, these bodies shall have agility, and shall be quick to act as is the mind to think, as St. Augustine says: "Wherever the spirit may will to be, there the body is at once."

When this glorious resurrection shall have taken place, only then is full restitution of the race of man, and consummation of the creation. Then will all things be restored to the original condition.

What an exalted dignity and how lofty a destination has our body! When we were regenerated by holy Baptism, then was our body sanctified, not only as a

sacred dwelling-place for a divinely gifted soul, but also as a temple of the Holy Ghost.

Consider what glory this body of ours shall possess, if with it and in it we have served God faithfully, have overcome the flesh, have fought a good fight against the world and Satan, and for our reward have received an eternal crown in heaven! Our present tribulation is, in truth, to be reckoned but light and momentary, since it brings us to an everlasting, all-surpassing glory.

Let us, therefore, strive to appreciate the grace of our adoption as sons of God, and let us guard this grace with all due care; let us mortify the cravings of the flesh by the strength of the spirit.

In faith, hope, and love let us lead a truly Christian life on earth, that with soul and body we may rest with God in heaven in a state of everlasting glory. There, my beloved, is our true home, our only lasting happiness, in company with Jesus and Mary, with all the saints and the elect of God. Amen.

SERMON XII.

The Second Glorious Mystery.

THE ASCENSION.

"And the Lord Jesus, after He had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God."—*St. Mark* xvi. 19.

Beloved in Christ the Lord:

To-day we continue the consideration of the glorious fruit of redemption. The first-fruit was shown to us in contemplating the mystery of Christ's Resurrection. It is the spiritual rising of our soul to the life of grace, and the future reunion of body and soul and resurrection to a life of glory.

The second fruit is indicated to us by the mystery of Our Blessed Lord's Ascension. For by His glorious Ascension Jesus Christ has opened heaven to man, from which he had been barred out by sin. This second glorious fruit of redemption is the subject of our sermon to-day.

After His Resurrection from the grave our Divine Redeemer remained for forty days on earth. During this period He appeared at many different times to His disciples, had frequent intercourse with them, and spoke many things concerning the kingdom of God. At the end of these forty days He led them to Mt. Olivet; and there, where His bitter passion had begun, and near to Calvary, where His passion had ended, He parted from them, and before their eyes

ascended up to heaven. With Him He took the blessed company of the righteous who had been detained in Limbo awaiting with great desire the coming of this time. He bore them to the heavenly Jerusalem whose doors He had unbarred; with songs of joy and loud hosannahs the heavenly host received Him. A glorious throne awaited Him on the right hand of the Father, and there He sitteth with His divine and human nature in the full power and majesty of God. Therefore by Our Blessed Lord's Ascension our own human nature, soul and body, was exalted to the highest place in heaven. "God . . . hath raised us up together, and hath made us sit together in the heavenly places through Christ Jesus" (Eph. ii. 4, 6).

Yes, heaven itself was opened to the human race. All pure and righteous souls will there find entrance after death, or after a further purifying in Purgatory, when, joined to the risen body on the last great day, they enter in the heavenly realm of bliss.

To heaven, then, my brethren, let us turn our thoughts, and consider it in the first place as the dwelling-place of its blessed inhabitants and of the heavenly citizens themselves. Afterwards we shall consider those joys found there by God's elect. I continue in the name of Jesus, the King of Glory, and of Mary, our gracious heavenly Queen.

I.

I. First, then, as to the abode of heavenly beings, the dwelling-place of heaven's inhabitants, let us gain what light we can from the teachings of Holy Scripture.

The paradise on earth was plainly a definite place prepared by God for man. Heaven, the heavenly paradise, is also a definite place, which divine Omnipotence has prepared as an everlasting abode for the righteous, for His children, and for His beloved. Our Blessed Redeemer has spoken of heaven as His "Father's house," in which there are "many mansions." He made mention of it as the place whence He had descended and whither He should return again. Surely one can speak thus only of a distinct place. St. Thomas, who with his enlightened mind looked so deeply into divine mysteries, has said: "Heaven must be a material place, as it is the dwelling-place of man, who, even after the resurrection, shall still remain man, a material being. Therefore is heaven a definite place for the abode of the blessed."

What appearance shall this heavenly dwelling-place possess? St. Paul, in writing to the Corinthians, says that "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love Him"(1 Cor. ii. 9). These words refer to this heavenly abode of the blessed. The splendor and the glory of heaven are supernatural, and therefore cannot be comprehended or realized by men. Yet we know that terrestrial things present to us the symbols and reflection of things supernatural, and enable us to gain some knowledge concerning the same.

Our divine Redeemer Himself made use of such symbols in His teaching and illustrated His supernatural doctrines by familiar things. Therefore we may hope from certain earthly contemplations to gain some knowledge of Heaven as the home of God's elect.

What wondrous beauty and magnificence, and how

many objects grateful to our senses do we find surrounding us in this world! God gives all this to be enjoyed, even by sinners, by His enemies, and by godless unbelievers. What then shall have been prepared by Him in heaven for his own beloved children!

To the Evangelist St. John there was revealed the splendor and glory of the celestial kingdom, and this was done by means of wondrous pictures taken from the realm of nature. In the Apocalypse he has recorded a description of the glorious things he saw. Let us hear a part what he says: "And there came one of the seven Angels; . . . and he took me up in spirit to a great and high mountain, and he showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, having the glory of God: and the light thereof like to a precious stone, as to the jasper-stone, even to crystal. And it had a wall great and high, having twelve gates: and in the gates twelve Angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel. On the East, three gates: and on the North, three gates: and on the South, three gates; and on the West, three gates. And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them, the twelve names of the twelve Apostles of the Lamb. . . . And the city lieth four-square, and the length thereof is as great as the breadth: and he measured the city with the golden reed for twelve thousand furlongs. . . . And the building of the wall thereof was of jasper-stone: but the city itself pure gold, like to clear glass. And the foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation, jasper; the second, sapphire. . . . And I saw no temple therein. For the Lord God Almighty is the temple thereof, and the

Lamb. And the city hath no need of the sun, nor of the moon, to shine in it; for the glory of God hath enlightened it, and the Lamb is the lamp thereof. . . . And the gates thereof shall not be shut by day: for there shall be no night there" (Apoc. xxi. 9–25). Thus did St. John, the seer of the New Covenant, behold the heavenly Jerusalem, the dwelling-place forever of the blessed. And the glorious splendor of this supernatural abode was made known to him by means of earthly figures and symbols. These mysterious symbols now need an explanation. In proceeding to interpret them we shall continue to be guided by the Holy Scriptures and the Fathers of the Church.

Let us consider first the architecture of the city of God according to the description of St. John.

The heavenly Jerusalem is built in a square, twelve thousand furlongs each in length and breadth and height. By this we can gain an idea of its great size and its perfect proportions. "Being built in a square, it is a firmly settled place, without chance of change or motion, and is therefore a dwelling-place most suitable for Almighty God and for His own beloved ones." Thus speaks St. Thomas. There are no storms, no confusion, nor conflicts of the elements. There is no change of time and season; for there is an everlasting spring, an even temperature, pleasant and divine, that neither excites nor enervates.

St. John saw the heavenly city of the blessed surrounded with a wall having twelve gates, and upon the gates twelve angels to guard the city.

This would teach us that heaven is a place securely guarded against the evil spirits without, and that its inhabitants need in no wise fear the attacks of enemies. No ill can enter there, no tempter can in-

trude to worry or beguile the blessed, as was the case in paradise on earth. The twelve gates bear upon them the names of the twelve Apostles, because they had announced the gospel of salvation to the world, had pointed out to men the way to heaven, and had received from their divine Master the keys thereof.

The names of the twelve tribes of Israel are likewise written on these gates; because all God's elect, whether they be Jew or Gentile, become, through faith, the children of Abraham, and heaven's gates are open to them. To North and South and East and West they stand forever open, inviting all nations of the world to enter in.

The celestial city has twelve foundation-stones, each one a precious jewel; and most firmly founded is the heavenly Jerusalem, for these stones represent Christ the Lord, and His twelve Apostles.

The wall is entirely built of precious stones, and the city itself of purest gold. The foundation-stones are studded with all kinds of brilliant gems, and each gate consists of one great pearl. The streets are of pure gold, and yet transparent as glass.

All this, my brethren, conveys to us the knowledge that the home of the blessed contains such beauties and splendors as transcend our thoughts; and is abundantly supplied with everything that divine Omnipotence has prepared in loving generosity for His children.

St. John beheld a most brilliant illumination throughout the city, yet not produced by sun nor moon and stars, for "the glory of God hath enlightened it, and the Lamb is the lamp thereof." Thus God doth fill all things in heaven with the light of His glorious

presence, with the undimmed splendor of His truth; and Jesus there stands forth in His glorified humanity a Lamp whose rays outshine the sun and moon. Yes, God is Himself the Eternal Light that illumines the heavenly Jerusalem.

This surely teaches us that all created glory is in heaven, exalted by the splendor of divinity into a heavenly radiance, supernatural and glorified, compared to which all created light and splendor of the universe fades into obscurity.

St. John tells us that he saw no temple in the Jerusalem on high, "For the Lord God Almighty is the temple thereof, and the Lamb." That is to say, the blessed need no particular edifice as we do upon the earth; for in heaven they enjoy the beatific vision, they see God face to face, and forever raise incessant songs of praise, yielding to Him a continual service of worship and thanksgiving. Christ's Church on earth indeed foreshadows this glad service, and prepares us to take part in the unending worship of the Church Triumphant in heaven.

From what we have said, my brethren, you may be able to gain some faint idea as to the dwelling-place of the blessed ones in heaven. Doubtless it has sufficed to let you know that heaven's glories excel in splendor all that we can possibly conceive of, for the most rare and precious objects of this world can give us but a feeble image thereof.

Let us now turn our thoughts to the inhabitants of this glorious city, and learn something of those heavenly beings.

Above all others in the heavenly Jerusalem is manifest the Holy Trinity, infinite, inscrutable, included in no space, yet in a special way revealed unto the bless-

ed. Therefore is heaven called the dwelling-place of God.

Enthroned at the right hand of the Father is the God-man, from whose humanity there proceeds a radiant glory that illuminates the city's wide expanse. He sitteth there in His majestic splendor, the King of heaven and of the whole creation. Near to the throne of her divine Son sits Mary, the Mother of Jesus; the Mother, too, of all the saints and angels; and not only is she there as Mother of the world's Redeemer, but as the loving Mother of the redeemed who have entered into the joy of the Lord.

Around the throne of God and the Lamb stands an innumerable company of angels, saints, apostles, martyrs, confessors, and virgins, all that "have washed their robes, and have made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

There, too, will meet those who were united here below by bonds of blood, of friendship, and of Christian love, who by their holy lives on earth have gained eternal life in heaven. They see and recognize each other, they love with a pure and heavenly love, and rejoice in everlasting bliss and happiness. They one and all resemble the glorified Redeemer, their King and yet their Brother, the origin and source of all their bliss.

Thus far, beloved, we may speak as to the blessed inhabitants of the heavenly Jerusalem, and it now remains to consider the joys and happiness possessed by them. This shall constitute our second part.

II.

Wherein consists the bliss of the elect in heaven? Let us receive our answer to this question from reason and from revelation.

As a general rule, true happiness cannot be found in aught save what may satisfy the human heart sanctified by grace. Man, made in the divine image, is by grace partaker of the divine nature, and thus exalted to a heavenly state, can only find true satisfaction in that wherein God is blessed through sharing the divine bliss.

St. Augustine thus speaks, addressing the Almighty: "We are created for Thee, O Lord, and no rest doth our heart find till it shall rest in Thee."

God is all blessed. He is in truth infinitely blessed, because He is perfection, the highest and most perfect Being, combining in Himself all perfections; fully conscious of this, and rejoicing in His own perfectness to all eternity. He has within Him the source and fount of infinite bliss, and needs no other being to supply it. Angels and men who have their life and their all from God can then be blessed only when God grants them a share of His own bliss. This is done by God, as the Psalmist says when he assures us, "Thou shalt make them drink of the torrent of Thy pleasure; for with Thee is the fountain of life, and in Thy light we shall see light" (Ps. xxxv. 9, 10). The sanctified human heart can quench its thirst for happiness only by drinking from the fountain of God's bliss. Let us consider, then, some things for which the heart of man doth thirst.

It craves for truth, for full and clear perception of

the truth. But God is truth, and contains within Himself alone all truth. Therefore, as He is perfectly conscious of Himself, and knows Himself to be the truth, He is herein infinitely blessed; and as He doth permit His elect to share this knowledge He blesses them as He himself is blessed.

While here upon this earth we may know God through light of reason, and, better still, through faith; yet our best knowledge is imperfect. "We see now through a glass in a dark manner, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I shall know even as I am known" (I Cor. xiii. 12). Thus speaks St. Paul. And the holy Apostle St. John writes: "Dearly beloved, we are now the sons of God, and it hath not yet appeared what we shall be. We know that when He shall appear we shall be like to Him, because we shall see him as He is" (I. John iii. 2). The holy Apostle here would signify to us that two things are necessary for our salvation: First, that we shall see God in His nature and His essence. Second, that we shall resemble Him as doth a child his father. We are unable to see God without resembling Him, without participation in His nature. Therefore in heaven, to the light of reason and faith, there comes the light of glory, a light truly divine, in which the elect behold God face to face.

"To behold God!" These are simple words, but who can fathom the depth of their meaning? To see God is to gain clear knowledge of Him, the highest, the perfect One, and therefore is to gain the highest bliss.

In beholding God the blessed see all mysteries of faith. They see all marvels of creation and the preservation and government of the world by divine Prov-

idence. They see unveiled the mysteries of our redemption. They read at a glance the history of all the world and of every individual. In God they see themselves freed from all sin and chance of sinning, and removed from every thought of evil. They understand how they have entered, with their knowledge of life and love, into life, the eternal life of God. There they realize how God has loved them from eternity; how His eyes at all times rested on them; how He guided them at this time and at that, and at all times; how they suffered and overcame temptations; or were pardoned from sin, and gained abundant grace.

Thus, while God allows His elect to share His nature and his knowledge, at the same time He makes them participators in His bliss.

If we ask "what further cravings hath the human heart?" the answer comes at once: "It craves and longs for love. It desires to love and to be loved; and this desire is fulfilled in heaven in the purest and most perfect manner. In God the elect of Heaven find the wished-for object of their love, and He again returns them infinite love. The flames of love arise from God's heart and inflames theirs with love, and these flames, attracted by each other, mingle together in one great fire of love. With the same love that God loves them they love God and all whom He loves. Thus they become blessed as God is blessed.

Furthermore, the human heart desires a state of happiness that shall not change, but shall endure forever. This the elect will find in heaven, wherein they have entered into eternal life with God, and in beholding and loving God forever their happiness consists.

Many are the joys and blessings attending the eter-

nal life of God's elect. The immortal eye doth ever feast upon the magnificence and splendor of the heavenly Jerusalem, and delights to view the beauty and the glory of angels and saints of God. The ear is charmed with glorious songs of praise and heavenly melodies and strains of worship, in adoration of the Triune God and of the Lamb.

The softest fragrance and sweetest odors are diffused, and contribute to the perfect satisfaction of the senses.

The everlasting heavenly marriage-supper delights the taste with the heavenly food prepared for the glorified.

The feeling will be gratified with most pleasant sensations, since the blessed man is plunged in a very sea of bliss and joy.

All these things, my brethren, are made known to us by reason and revelation as constituting the happiness of God's elect. But notwithstanding all that we have mentioned or conceived of, it still remains most certain that "the eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love Him." Yes, in truth, the bliss of the elect far surpasses all that we can express or feel or think of.

St. Ignatius exclaimed, "Oh, how hideous seems the earth when I raise my thoughts to heaven!"

Can we not then understand something of the joy with which the holy Martyrs met their death that they might enter into life with God.

Can we not understand the mighty zeal which prompted holy Confessors to renounce all worldly honors and possessions for a life of poverty, self-discipline, and penance?

Can we not comprehend the spirit of the many youths and virgins who embraced a life secluded from all worldly pleasures that they might enjoy the everlasting marriage-feast in heaven? Surely the Christian will understand all this; but what is incomprehensible is, that there are men, aye, and Christians, who prefer to gratify the lusts of the eye, of the flesh, and pride, rather than lead a Christian life.

Let us in conclusion quote St. Gregory: "What tongue can express, what intellect can grasp, the bliss awaiting the elect in heaven? Who can imagine what it means to be amongst the angelic choirs, to take part with the blessed in glorifying God, to behold the face of God, to dwell in the splendor of Infinite Light, to be undisturbed by any fear of change or death, but to rejoice in the gift of immortality?" Our soul doth truly languish for this, and desires even now to enter those realms of eternal bliss. Surely such great rewards can be obtained only by great exertions. Therefore the Apostle says, "For he also that striveth for the mastery is not crowned except he strive lawfully" (II. Tim. ii. 5). Then let the magnitude of the rewards inspire us all to strive, but let not the battle with our enemies affright us." Thus speaks St. Gregory. And our divine Redeemer bids us "strive to enter in by the narrow gate; for many, I say to you, shall seek to enter, and shall not be able" (St. Luke xiii. 24).

Yes, my beloved, let us strive to enter heaven; and that we may do so, let us follow the path of humility, self-discipline, and penance; the path of prayer and the commandments of God and the Church: the path marked out by the duties of our vocation. By doing this we shall be striving to enter by the "narrow gate," the only way to heaven. Amen.

SERMON XIII.

The Third Glorious Mystery.

THE DESCENT OF THE HOLY GHOST.

God "gives the good Spirit to them that ask Him."—*St. Luke* xi. 13.

Beloved in Christ the Lord:

The coming of God the Holy Ghost from heaven is the Third Glorious Mystery of the Rosary, the third blessed fruit of redemption, and is the subject of our discourse to-day.

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, has redeemed the world, has gained for us men all graces that we stand in need of, and has opened unto us the gates of heaven.

To impart to us the graces for salvation, He sent down from heaven the Holy Ghost, who proceeds from God the Father and the Son. Our divine Redeemer founded the Church as the kingdom of God on earth, has made her "the pillar and ground of truth," and the dispenser of the graces of redemption. He Himself rules the Church, invisibly through the Holy Ghost, and visibly through her superiors on earth. Through the Holy Ghost He invests her with infallibility in teaching, and through Him He dispenses the wondrous graces that flow through the holy Sacraments. In this way is the Church divinely empowered to teach and sanctify all men by truth

and grace, and to lead them to eternal life. St. Irenæus says, "Wherever the Church is, there is the Holy Ghost; and where the Holy Ghost is, there is the Church and every grace." But the Holy Spirit lives not only in the Church: He lives and acts in the soul of every just man, and indeed would live in every soul. He illuminates the heart with heavenly light, He sanctifies with His divine grace, He guides and leads the soul into its heavenly home, and bears it safely from the Church militant on earth unto the Church triumphant in heaven.

The seven gifts of the Holy Ghost are the blessed means which He employs to sanctify the soul of man and lead Him to salvation. They are so many steps by which we all must mount to perfection. In the words of St. Augustine, "If we would rise, the first step is 'Holy Fear;' the second, 'Piety;' the third, 'Knowledge;' the fourth, 'Fortitude;' the fifth, 'Counsel;' the sixth, 'Understanding;' the seventh, 'Wisdom.'" These, my brethren, are the seven gifts of God the Holy Ghost. Four of them serve to fit our heart for receiving Christian truth, the remaining three strengthen us to lead a Christian life. Therefore you will realize the great importance of these wondrous blessings, and how worthy of our careful consideration they are, as they deal directly with the way of our salvation.

First, then, we shall consider those four gifts which influence our intellect, and secondly the three which affect our will. May the same Holy Spirit guide us in the work! I continue in the name of Jesus and of Mary.

I.

When, by Baptism, we were born again of water and the Holy Ghost, then we were cleansed from sin, partook of sanctifying grace, were made children of God, and a "temple" of the Holy Spirit; for then the Holy Ghost took up His abode within our soul. The Apostle says: "Know you not that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (I. Cor. iii. 16.) When thus regenerated, we receive, together with sanctifying grace, the three divine virtues and the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost, as a glorious birthday present from our heavenly Father. These gifts are bestowed to enable us to live as children of God and as inheritors of a heavenly kingdom. They are adapted to the two chief powers of man's soul, i.e., intellect and will.

Intellect is given to us that we may know what is true, good, beautiful, and right; and free will is given us that we may act voluntarily upon such knowledge. God has revealed all that is necessary for us to know, and this is conveyed to us by the teaching of His holy and infallible Church. The four gifts of the Holy Ghost which enable the intellect to grasp things supernatural, and to receive divinely revealed truths, are these: the gift of knowledge, of counsel, of understanding, and of wisdom. How this is effected we shall now more fully consider.

By the gift of knowledge the Holy Spirit will bestow on us true knowledge of God, of divine truths, and of salvation. *True* knowledge, I say; for not every kind of knowledge is conducive to the soul's salvation. St. Bernard says: "There are some who

strive for knowledge, only that they may know; and this is merely curiosity. Others seek knowledge in order to make a name for themselves; and this is foolish vanity: others, in order to sell their information; and this is a shameful trade. But some there are who seek for knowledge that they may know their duties, and may instruct others therein; and this knowledge is the gift of the Holy Ghost."

Yes, my beloved, this differs very much from that which we acquire by our own inquiry and study. This is a divine light which teaches us to know God and His holy will, which shows us our duties to God, to our neighbor, and ourself. It causes us to receive and understand the moral and religious doctrines of the Church, and to grasp them with most certain conviction.

This knowledge also teaches us to set a proper value on all temporal things, and rightly to estimate this world's belongings. It is in truth the knowledge of the kingdom of God, the knowledge of the saints, and excels all worldly knowledge as grace excels nature, or heaven earth.

Let one be as learned as he may in worldly science, if he be without this gift of the Holy Spirit, his knowledge is of no true worth, because it avails not to salvation for himself or others. Indeed, without true piety, such knowledge inflates a man with pride; and plunges him, as it did Lucifer, into the depths of hell. But the knowledge which is given by the Holy Ghost leads us to God, to all virtues, and to everlasting life. This sacred gift was poured in fullest measure upon the holy Apostles. They were humble fishermen of Galilee, unlearned and ignorant, before receiving the gifts of the Holy Ghost; but

afterwards their information surpassed that of the world's most learned men.

St. Antony possessed this gift in an eminent degree. He could neither read nor write, and yet he was, for thousands of souls, an excellent guide of the way to salvation. He was able to refute heretical teachings with marvellous ingenuity, he converted great numbers of the heathen, and he put to shame several proud scholars who came to test his knowledge.

The Abbot Rupert, of Deutz, near Cologne, possessed a knowledge of the Holy Scriptures far exceeding that of others of his time. This blessed gift was bestowed on him in answer to his fervent prayers for the gifts of the Holy Ghost.

Therefore let us pray earnestly for the gift of knowledge, the knowledge of God and of eternal life; for without this all other knowledge is vain and unprofitable.

The second gift of the Holy Ghost, by which the intellect is influenced, is the gift of counsel. It is a supernatural light from the Holy Spirit, by which, in doubtful cases, we perceive the right; by which we see what tends to the glory of God and to the soul's salvation. Are we not all at times in serious doubt as to our course in matters of grave importance to the soul? Then does this divine gift become necessary. At such times many things conspire to deceive us and blind our eyes to the right; our own selfishness, and the wiles of Satan, who often appears as an angel of light, would hurry us astray unless holy counsel guided us.

When concerned as to his vocation, and in many other moments of his life, the natural man, even with

the very best intentions, is sadly perplexed, and often undecided what to do. Whereas his course is very plain; and is, to pray most earnestly to God the Holy Ghost for counsel. If this be done with all sincerity and with humility, God will surely grant the true light leading to the proper course. Would all men but realize this and act upon it, how many sad mistakes and how much endless misery for this world and the next might be avoided.

The third gift is understanding. And this blessed gift of the Holy Ghost is granted only to Christians who, with humble faith and pure heart, are striving earnestly to lead a holy life. By the bestowal of understanding God will lead the pious souls to a higher knowledge of Himself and of all virtue. He will dispose their hearts for a deeper insight to the mysteries of religion, which surpass all human understanding. Simple and unlearned men and women who have this holy gift possess far clearer knowledge of God's truths than profound and eminent scholars who lack it. This wondrous gift in all its fulness was given to the blessed Apostles; hence their penetrating vision to divine mysteries and truths of our holy religion. Many of the saints, too, have possessed it in a marked degree, as St. Francis of Assisi, who drew enraptured crowds to hear his sermons, yet was a man of no great natural ability. And St. Thomas Aquinas could speak and write about divine things as though their fullest meaning was revealed to his clear view.

Among holy women, St. Catherine of Siena, St. Teresa, and St. Bridget were blessed with divine understanding in such measure as to astonish all the world by their knowledge of heavenly things. By

these we see how surely God hath chosen the foolish of this world to put to shame the wise.

Let us therefore pray, with holy David, "O Lord, give me understanding, and I will search thy Law, and I will keep it with my whole heart" (Ps. cxviii. 33, 34).

Lastly, there is the gift of wisdom. The world delights to term the vain and deceitful knowledge of itself wisdom; but St. Paul says of such wise men, "Professing themselves wise, they become fools" (Rom. i. 22). The true wisdom that cometh from the Holy Ghost is called by St. Bonaventure "a supernatural capacity, bestowed by God, to know Him and to love Him with ecstasy."

This gift of wisdom not only enlightens the intellect, as do the gifts of knowledge, counsel, and understanding; but also it enkindles within the heart an exalted love and fondness for divine things; and increases the fervent longing of the heart to know God more fully, love Him more earnestly, and see Him at last face to face in heaven. It thus disposes man's understanding for the highest and most perfect knowledge, and influences his will to know and follow the will of God. It is therefore a most powerful assistance to attaining the end of the Christian life. Among all the gifts of God the Holy Ghost, wisdom is the most excellent, as it comprises them all within itself. How precious, then, should be this blessing, and how dearly prized by every Christian! For God will grant it unto every one who humbly seeks for it by prayer, and proper disposition of heart for its reception. Into an impure heart, says Holy Scripture, wisdom cannot enter. Therefore let us follow the

directions of St. James in seeking for this gift. He says: "If any of you want wisdom, let him ask of God, . . . and it shall be given him" (St. James i. 5).

Thus far, my brethren, we have considered the four gifts of the Holy Spirit that benefit our understanding. We have seen how they enlighten and enable our hearts to receive knowledge of divine things; how they teach us, in all affairs of life, to choose and follow the right course; how they dispose us to enter more fully into knowledge of the mysteries of religion; and lastly, how they powerfully incline our heart and will to God and to things divine. We now turn our attention to the three remaining spiritual gifts that in particular affect the will, and enable us to live according to the dictates of the instructed and enlightened mind.

II.

These gifts are, fear of God, piety, and fortitude. They are needed by every one who wills to lead a Christian life, for without them such life can have no consistency nor endurance.

The fear of God is the first of the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost, when reckoned in the order from least to greatest. In the Book of Proverbs we read: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (Prov. ix. 10). With a holy fear of God, therefore, the Christian, God-pleasing life begins.

There are, however, two ways of fearing God. First, there is a servile fear; that is, a fear to displease God solely on account of the punishment incurred thereby, as a slave dreads to act against the commands of his Master. It is proper for a Christian to

possess this fear in some degree, and indeed it is a gift of God. The Ninivites were seized with such a fear when the Prophet Jonas announced the destruction of their city unless they did penance; and they were moved thereby to turn with contrite hearts to God, and thus their city was preserved to them.

Secondly, there is a filial fear; that is, a dread of displeasing God solely by reason of the grief it causes Him; as a loving child fears to offend his father by doing evil. The source of this fear lies in the Christian's filial love for his heavenly Father, and it is a far more excellent gift than servile fear.

This loving fear is, however, usually the result or outcome of servile fear. For the heart, being aroused to the danger of offending God, fears to think or to will or to do anything contrary to His commands. Thus is begotten a horror and a dread of sin, because to sin is to offend God. This, then, is the "beginning of wisdom," the first step on the path to Christian perfection. Where holy fear is wanting, there the soil is ill suited for the growth of a virtuous and Christian life. The more intense and greater this fear, the more certain is the foundation of a God-pleasing life. The saints of God have all possessed it, and hence they prayed zealously and incessantly that they might not be led into temptation. They were most careful to avoid the occasions of sin, and would have died rather than offend God in the least degree. Accordingly they were at all times ready to "cut off the hand" or "pluck out the eye" that might occasion them to fall into the commission of any sin.

Let us search our hearts, my brethren, and look well into our lives, and see if they be guided by this filial fear, the beginning of all wisdom. Let us often

pray with David, "O Lord, pierce my flesh with Thy fear."

The second gift affecting the will is piety. This exalts the soul a step higher than holy fear. A good child rests not contented in forbearing to offend his loved father, but ever seeks to give him pleasure by yielding him ready and willing obedience in all things. He dearly loves his father, and desires constantly to be in his presence and to give him joy. And this we term a pious child. Just this will mark the true Christian and child of God. He is not satisfied with not offending God: he loves Him above all things, thinks of Him continually, and strives in every way to please Him. Moreover, such a child does not love his Father alone, to the exclusion of all others: nay, he also loves all those whom his Father loves, and this is to His honor and joy. He loves the angels about his Father's throne; he loves the holy saints, in whom God is glorified, and who belong to the very household of God. Particularly great is his love for Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar, the sacrament of love. Above all saints and angels he loves the holy Mary, Mother of the Redeemer and redeemed; for she is nearest to God's throne in heaven, and is most beloved by Him. Lastly, he loves his neighbor because God commands him to do so, and because together with himself they were redeemed.

Prayer and the reading of holy books; listening to the word of God; devout attendance at divine worship, especially at holy Mass; visiting and receiving the Blessed Sacrament—all these are joyful duties to the heart of every Christian in whom the gift of piety resides.

With what a measure of piety or godliness were

the saints blessed! St. Paul thus speaks of it: "Godliness is profitable to all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come" (I. Tim. iv. 8). Yes, my brethren, piety is truly profitable; it contents the heart; it gives peace and consolation in every event of our life, and brings a foretaste of the blessedness of heaven. O sweetest gift of piety, mayst thou be bestowed on every Christian heart, and dwell therein until the perfect godliness of heaven be attained!

Finally, there is the gift of fortitude—a virtue necessary to the Christian life. It must be possessed together with holy fear and piety, in order to incline our will forever to what is right. To all who strive to lead a pious life there will come many and great temptations. Holy Scripture assures us of this, and man's own experience confirms it. Satan, the world, and the flesh assail these souls with all their might, and make their lives a lasting warfare. The gift of fortitude, however, endows them with a wondrous strength, and gives a power to the human will enabling it to overcome all trials, to despise all wiles and threats, and cleave with perseverance to the path of virtue. How mightily gifted with fortitude was the holy Apostle St. Paul. We know from his own words that when he felt himself most weak, then he was most strong. To the Romans he writes: "Who then shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation? or distress or famine? or nakedness? or danger? or persecution? or the sword? (as it is written: For Thy sake we are put to death all the day long: we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.) But in all these things we overcome because of Him that hath loved us. For I am sure that neither death,

nor life, nor angels nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor might, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus Our Lord" (Rom. viii. 35–39).

Indeed to all the Apostles a great measure of divine strength was given, and their fortitude enabled them cheerfully to endure suffering, shame, and persecution unto death, for the sake of Christ the Lord. This gift has strengthened millions of martyrs, and caused them to have no fear of the executioner's axe, or the fire and stake, or glowing grate, or boiling pitch and oil, or teeth and claws of animals, or any other infernal torture that satanic malice could invent.

Unnumbered saints, confessors, and virgins have been so strengthened that they joyfully renounced wealth and luxury to pass their lives in heroic combat with the world, the flesh, and the devil; and trained and perfected by this very contest, obtained a glorious victory. A divine strength, a supernatural courage, is imparted to man's feeble will by this gift of fortitude, and by it the soul can overcome all enemies of salvation. Fortified with this mighty gift every Christian can say, with the Apostle, "I can do all things in Him who strengtheneth me" (Phil. iv. 13).

Thus we may see how God the Holy Ghost arms the faithful Christian soldier for his combat against the enemies of his soul. These holy gifts, however, are granted in a different measure to different souls; for God bestows His gifts as He pleaseth, and giveth abundance where abundance is implored and merited. The efficacy of these gifts is also regulated by zealous co-operation therewith on our part. The work of the Holy Ghost in attaining our salvation is by many men

but lightly considered; hence there is little prayer to Him for the increase of His holy gifts. And this is one reason why the spiritual life at present is so seldom found even among Christian people.

Therefore, dear brethren, let us pray fervently and incessantly to God the Holy Ghost, that He will descend into our hearts, fill them to overflowing with His blessed gifts, enlighten them with His knowledge, and inflame them with His love.

Let us call earnestly upon the Blessed Virgin for her powerful intercession in obtaining these graces, especially by frequent use of the Rosary. Through Mary God has given us our Redeemer, and through Mary we can obtain from Him the blessings of redemption. Pray then for us, Mary, Queen of the most holy Rosary, and obtain for us the fullest measure of the seven gifts of God the Holy Ghost. Amen.

SERMON XIV.

The Fourth Glorious Mystery.

THE ASSUMPTION.

"My soul hath thirsted after the strong living God; when shall I come and appear before the face of God?"—*Ps.* xli. 3.

Beloved in Christ the Lord:

The three preceding sermons on the Glorious Mysteries have shown to us three blessed fruits of our Divine Redeemer's work. The first of these is the resurrection of our soul from the tomb of sin unto the life of grace, and the future resurrection of our body to be reunited with the soul in life eternal. This is assured to us and typified by Christ's Resurrection. The second fruit is the life of bliss and everlasting glory in Heaven, opened unto us by the Ascension. The third is the abiding presence of God the Holy Ghost, imparting unto us His blessed gifts and dispensing graces for salvation.

In these three chief fruits of redemption, all others are comprised; and the Glorious Mysteries which we have still to consider contain no new fruits other than those already noticed. These two Mysteries, however, contain a life, a death, and glory, in which we may behold in all perfection the fulness of these blessed fruits.

The Mystery of the Assumption, now to be con-

sidered, directs our thoughts at first to the event itself. viz., the passing from this world to Heaven of the Blessed Virgin; but there is a deeper meaning brought to those who meditate upon this Mystery. For they will find in this event the consummation of a perfect life of grace, and the glorious departure from the life of care on earth unto the blessed life eternal in heaven.

From the beginning of Mary's life until the end, we see in her a very masterpiece of divine grace, and at the same time continual co-operation on her part with the grace bestowed on her by God. The result of this full outpouring of God's grace and her submissive will was the moral perfection and the virtues exhibited through the whole of Mary's life. Therefore, in her we all can see what man or woman may be, with God's grace joined to a good will.

Her death was worthy of her life; a willing resignation of life on earth and a glorious transit to eternal bliss in heaven.

As a man lives, so does he die; and as he dies, so is his eternal condition. There may be exceptions at times to this; but the general rule is, "As man doth live, thus he doth die."

For us all life is a time in which to prepare ourselves for a holy death and blessed passage to eternity. Let us, therefore, carefully consider the life and death of Mary, that we may contemplate a perfect example, may strive to imitate her holy life, and attain with her unto a blessed death.

In the first part we shall consider the life of the Blessed Virgin; and then her death and passage to eternal life. I continue in the name of Jesus and of Mary, the Queen of the Holy Rosary.

I.

How wondrously exalted was the office which Mary had been destined by God to fill! How marvellous was her entrance into the world! And how sublime was her departure.

From all eternity God proposed the Incarnation of His divine Son, and from all eternity had destined the Virgin to be Mother of His Son. This truly is an office, a vocation so exalted that no other creature can share or at all approach it. The dignity of "Mother of God" raises Mary far above all men and angels, and brings her to a close and intimate relation with the holy Trinity. St. Thomas Aquinas says that "the Blessed Virgin, as Mother of God, possesses an infinite dignity, on account of the infinite treasure to whom she was united." This infinite treasure is, however, the Holy Trinity, and thus with each of the divine Persons she is closely united. No human intellect can fully understand this, nor comprehend her greatness and dignity by reason of this union. As the Mother of the "Eternal Word," the second Person of the Blessed Trinity, she bears to Him the close connection of a mother to her son. With the Father she has the same Son, who in His divinity was begotten of the Father from all eternity, and in time became man, of Mary. By power of God the Holy Ghost did she conceive the Son; and thus a relationship to the Holy Trinity more intimate than hers cannot be conceived.

To this wondrous exaltation of Mary as Mother of God, the gifts of grace bestowed on her must correspond. St. Thomas teaches that to every one, whom God gives an exalted vocation He grants sufficient

grace to obey the call and discharge the duties of that calling. Therefore, as the dignity of Mary's vocation far excels that of all men and angels, she likewise must excel them in all graces. There can be no blessing, no virtue of any kind, no grace that is bestowed by God upon His creatures, that was not given in fullest measure to Mary; and this indeed is not to be wondered at, for she is the Mother of Him who is the origin of all grace and blessings. And so it is we find that Mary was possessed of all the heavenly treasures of grace in the very highest degree. At the time of the Annunciation the angel greeted her as "full of grace." From the first moment of her existence, from her conception, she was filled with grace. No stain of original sin attended her conception; and this great privilege and blessing was given to her alone of Adam's children. Yet how could it have been otherwise? Surely it is not credible that the Mother of our Divine Redeemer should have stood for one brief moment under Satan's power or have been polluted by any stain of sin. Yet this freedom from original sin was accorded her solely by reason of Christ's merits, so that He is the Redeemer of Mary as He is of all mankind. There is, however, as St. Augustine teaches, a twofold way of redemption. The first raises the fallen man from the abyss of sin; the second prevents the man from falling. In the first way we and all mankind have been redeemed, in the second Mary alone. In both cases the price of redemption is the precious Blood of Christ.

St. Anselm, in speaking of the sinlessness of Mary, has the following words: "A sinlessness than which nothing more immaculate can be conceived, save God's purity alone, must justly adorn that Blessed

Virgin to whom not only God the Father willed to give His own beloved, co-equal Son, that she should share His parentage with Him; but also whom the Son Himself had chosen, to make her, by the power of the Holy Ghost, His Mother."

This preservation from all taint of sin is, however, only one of the blessings of the Immaculate Conception. Another is that the Blessed Virgin was adorned with sanctifying grace, as were our first parents, Adam and Eve, before sin; and thereby she became a partaker of all graces of redemption which God had ever resolved to bestow on men. Thus was Mary, at her conception, "full of grace," and to her soul was given a supernatural beauty; in truth a glorious dowry for the bride of the Holy Spirit.

Furthermore the Blessed Virgin was fully confirmed in grace, so that during life her soul was never stained by the lightest sin, nor the faintest shadow thereof. Her will was free, and ever so remained; yet it was fixed immovably, and firmly turned away from every thought of evil. This inflexibility of will was given her and preserved by divine grace. As Mary was wholly free from original sin and its consequences, so was she wholly free from inclination and inordinate desire unto evil. The whole bent of her mind and love of her heart were ever turned to God. With her there was no inconstancy nor faltering, but always a firm perseverance. As steadfast as the saints and angels in Heaven was Mary in her life on earth.

Lastly, to the fulness of grace and strength, there was added the continual increase of divine grace from the first moment of her life until the time of death.

If we co-operate faithfully with grace received from God, the direct result is to gain us greater grace.

"For to every one that hath shall be given, and he shall abound" (St. Matt. xxv. 29). And if now with this greater grace we shall still co-operate, we gain the more, and thus shall we abound and increase in grace as long as we live on earth. By God's will and intention this should be the state of every man. Then there would be true progress of the world to Christian perfection. This was indeed the case with Mary, and therefore she ever increased in merit and in God's grace.

Perhaps it has occurred to you to ask, how could the Blessed Virgin increase in grace when at the beginning of her life she was termed by God's angel "full of grace." By these words, however, we are to understand that she possessed the fulness of grace requisite to be the worthy Mother of God. She was not so filled with grace that she might not deserve and receive more. For she was chosen not only to be God's Mother, but also to be a grief-laden and sorrowful Mother, which does not of necessity pertain to all mothers. She shared with her Divine Son His sufferings and sorrows as though they were her own. She took part in the work of the Redemption until the hour of Calvary, where she stood at the foot of the Cross, so that the Fathers have spoken of her as co-Redeemer. Thus she had gained continual increase of grace during life, and at its close obtained such blessings and so great an effusion of grace that our intellect can hardly comprehend it.

As Mary has far surpassed all men and angels in worth and dignity, so also has she in virtues and in merit; and as no creature has received so much from God, so none has returned to Him as much as Mary has.

As, of all creatures she was the richest in grace, so also was she the most virtuous, meritorious, and most holy. All holiness is but co-operation of man with divine grace. And this co-operation, with ordinary men, is more or less imperfect; as evil desires and inclinations, selfishness, and natural disposition retard the work. Alternate falling into sin and rising again do interrupt habitual co-operation with God's grace. From all this the Blessed Virgin was free; she felt no evil inclinations or desires, she was free from sin and all its evil consequences; she was entirely without selfishness and wholly devoted to God, so that her will was one with the will of God. Thus she did not put the least obstacle in the way of God's grace, and was able to co-operate with His work in the most perfect manner. By these means she reached her holiness, her virtues, and a degree of perfection surpassing human comprehension.

Among the saints we usually find that one excels in one virtue in particular, another in some other; Mary, however, was perfected in all. She stands alone in this, no saint is comparable to her. "One is my dove, my perfect one is but one" (Can. vi. 8). Mary's life was one long chain of virtues. Every thought, word, and deed of hers, every one of her unnumbered griefs and sufferings, formed a constant and perfect practice of virtue. Her whole life is a model of all virtues for all men, of whatever age or state of life they be. And as in our Divine Redeemer we have a new, holy, and spiritual Father, so in Mary we all may find a new and holy Mother. Jesus and Mary are the new parents of a new race, a people of God, adopted by Him as children, and born of water and the Holy Ghost. With Jesus and Mary begins the

new, redeemed, and sanctified race, the new kingdom of God, the realm of truth and grace on earth, which shall become a realm of glory in heaven.

And thus, my brethren, we can see how marvellous was the excellence of Mary's life, how full of grace and of all moral perfection, and how rich in merits and in virtues. And, seeing this, we cannot but expect a glorious and most blessed death. This is now to be considered in the second part.

II.

God made not man for death. Death is the wages of sin, and came into the world by sin. "By one man sin came into the world, and with sin came death, because in one man all have sinned." This the Holy Scripture teaches us.

Since Mary, as we know, entered the world without sin, lived in it without sin, but with marvellous grace and virtue, we should suppose that she would be released from death. But Mary died, as her Divine Son died, that she might resemble Him in death as in her life, and that we should have her blessed death as an example.

This Fourth Mystery of the Holy Rosary contains within it three great and mysterious events, viz., a marvellous death, a marvellous resurrection, and reception into heaven.

Marvellous indeed was Mary's death. It had nothing of the bitterness which usually attends the death of men. St. Alphonsus tell us of three things only that can embitter death: first, attachment to this world, then compunction on account of sins committed, and lastly, fear of the uncertainty of our salvation. None

of the three, however, was felt by Mary at her death.

The Holy Scripture tells us that death has great terrors and bitterness for one who sets his heart on possessions of this world. But Mary's highest treasure and possession was God. Much more justly than St. Francis of Assisi she could say, "My God, and my all!" To God belonged her whole heart, and she was filled with a perfect love for Him, from the first throb of her heart on earth until she was received in heaven.

Compunction cannot be spoken of in connection with her, for she remained ever free from every taint of sin: every thought of hers, and word and deed, was directed to the glory of God. As her whole life was a constant practice of the highest virtues, so in death her life's perfection brought her the very fulness of all grace, and made her death a truly blessed one. The perfectness of love for God and her Divine Son was reached by her, but it was so perfect and so great that her human nature must succumb; and thus she died, from no weakness or decrepitude, but from her very superabundance of divine love. The holy Fathers speak of her passing away, not as "death," but as a falling asleep in ecstasy of love.

Fear as to her salvation could find no room in the heart of Mary, filled as it was to overflowing with love. She was certain that death would reunite her to her Divine Son, and sure of eternal life with Him. Therefore she was continually awaiting with eager longing for this blessed reunion.

When the announcement was made to St. Aloysius that he was soon to die, he received the news with joy and thanksgiving. How thankful then, beyond expression, must have been Mary as she felt the hour of

death approach! We cannot picture that holy death scene without seeing her give up her spirit in the arms of her Divine Son, and seeing the holy angels present to welcome the coming of their Queen.

A second miracle comprised in the mystery of the Assumption is the resurrection of the Blessed Virgin's body from the grave without the shadow of corruption approaching it. When the holy soul parted from that pure and virginal body the blessed angels carried it to heaven. The body lay there soulless indeed, but in full freshness of life, and in the grace, beauty, and resplendence of her holiness. A trace of corruption was nowhere visible. St. John of Damascus tells us, tradition says, that the Apostles, with the exception of St. Thomas, had been in a wondrous manner brought together at Jerusalem just at the time of Mary's death, and that they were present at her passing away. Together with the faithful there assembled, they bore her body to Gethsemane and buried it within a tomb. For three days the place echoed with strains of heavenly music. Then the Apostle St. Thomas arrived and earnestly wished to see the body of the Mother of the Lord. Thereupon the Apostles reopened the grave, but found not the body there: only a sweet and marvellous fragrance seemed to pervade the place. For the holy Mother had been raised up from the tomb after remaining there three days, even as her Divine Son had arisen. The body wherein had dwelt the Incarnate Word was not to become a prey to corruption. Indeed the very thought of such a thing is shocking to the feelings of a true Christian. The holy Fathers tell us that Mary arose in glorious splendor from the grave, and was taken up, body and soul, to heaven.

This reception into heaven is the third mystery contained in the Assumption. Mary passed from earth with body and soul to heaven, and thus enjoyed a blessed privilege which will be granted to the righteous only at the general resurrection on the Last Day.

Our Divine Redeemer and His holy Mother, our new spiritual parents, are in heaven body and soul, and they alone.

The angels who were present at Mary's death bore her to heaven with songs of joy and gladness. Jesus, with all the heavenly host, received His loved Mother and took her to the eternal city of God. What mortal being can imagine the glorious greetings given to Mary by the saints and angels on high! In her they saw and welcomed the most holy, meritorious, and exalted of all creatures; the fulness and perfection of divine grace. They saw in her the Mother of the heavenly King, the Queen of all saints and angels. How great was the joy of Adam and Eve to see the woman that had "crushed the serpent's head," as God had foretold to them in paradise! She had indeed crushed the head of the serpent, and entered triumphantly into heaven. How great the joy of patriarchs and prophets who had prophesied the Redeemer's coming and spoken of His Virginal Mother; of Joachim and Anna, the parents of the Blessed Virgin, and of the holy bridegroom St. Joseph. Shall we not rejoice also with the inhabitants of heaven at the glorious reception of our Divine Redeemer's Mother? If our hearts are truly inflamed with filial love, we surely must join in those songs of joy which greet the entrance of our Mother into heaven, and gladden her reception unto glory.

O ye saints and angels, be glad and rejoice! May your joy give rise to a holy longing in ourselves soon to join those heavenly songs of praise, and with you to greet the holy Virgin Mary.

Thus, my brethren, we have briefly considered these wondrous and miraculous events; the life and death of Mary and her reception into heaven.

As was her life, so was her death, and so is her eternal life; and this will be the case with every one of us. As is the life, such will be the death and the life beyond the grave. If there be any exceptions, they are, as says St. Jerome, "extremely few."

Who of us would not wish that his death should resemble the passing away of Mary? But this cannot be unless the life resembles hers; and the nearer that resemblance in life, the more like hers will be the death. A pious, virtuous life is the way to a blessed, holy death; and such a death is but a transit to a life of eternal joy. To lead a holy and virtuous life, as we have seen it in Mary, two things are requisite, viz., the grace of God, and our co-operation therewith. No one, of course, can receive the wondrous grace which God bestowed on Mary, but then God does not demand from others the holiness and wealth of virtue needed and gained by Mary.

He freely dispenses His grace, and gives with generous hand; and if we use his means zealously and worthily we will receive abundance. We know that God gives the right spirit to them that ask it, and we know we have but to ask that we may receive. The more humbly and perseveringly we pray for the right spirit, the more abundant streams of grace will flow into our souls. But the greatest outpouring of God's grace would be of little use to us unless there be faithful

co-operation on our parts. Let us in this strive to follow Mary.

Let us, with all care, avoid sin and evil. The death of a saint cannot follow the life spent in sin; the way to hell can never lead us to the gates of heaven. Thistles bear not roses, nor thorns grapes. Therefore let us practise piety and goodness throughout our life, and serve God always with joy, as did Mary, who called herself "the handmaid of the Lord." Let us fulfil the duties of our vocation and station of life as faithfully and willingly as did Mary. And with her, let us also bear patiently the sufferings and sorrows of this life from love of our suffering Redeemer.

O Holy Mother, glorious Mother, pray for us that we may live on earth only for Heaven, as thou didst live; and may die, in God's own time, a blessed and holy death as thou hast died. Pray that we too may be taken to thee for all eternity in heaven. Pray for us now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

SERMON XV.

The Fifth Glorious Mystery.

THE CORONATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

"The holy Mother of God is exalted above Angelic choirs unto the heavenly realms."—*Words of Church.*

Beloved in Christ the Lord:

We have now to consider the last Mystery of the Holy Rosary; the crowning of the glorious Virgin Mary with the brightest diadem of heaven's glory, by her Divine Son. In the course of our sermons on the Glorious Mysteries we have directed your thoughts to the contemplation of those blessed fruits of redemption borne to us, and typified by these glorious events; and also the wonderful profusion of gifts, blessings, and grace bestowed upon holy Mary, the Virginal Mother of God. Her Divine Son had clothed her with all virtues, and made her here on earth a creature of marvellous perfection.

In our last sermon, on the Fourth Glorious Mystery, we considered at some length the virtues and perfections of Mary's life, also the glory of her blessed death and entrance into heaven. You are now invited to raise your thoughts unto the heavenly City, far above sun and moon and stars, and rest them there where Mary doth now rest upon her throne in the full splendor of her heavenly glory.

As upon earth her position was unique, and her vocation higher than given to any other creature; so also in heaven is she exalted, and sits above the saints and angels and all the heavenly choirs. She has been given a place near to her Divine Son, "and sits, a Queen, at His right hand." By the title of "Queen," the Church at all times has addressed her in hymns and prayers. Time and again do the holy Fathers in their writings speak of her as "Queen of Heaven and earth." St. Athanasius says: "If her Son is King, then is His Mother properly a Queen, and is to be saluted as such." And this Fifth Glorious Mystery of the Rosary tells us of "Jesus, who hath crowned thee in heaven, O Glorious Virgin."

Yes, he hath crowned her, and with a crown of glorious splendor, with dignity and power above saints and angels and all the heavenly host.

Let us, therefore, contemplate our blessed Queen and Mother in all the glories of her exaltation; and this we shall strive to do in the first part of our discourse.

Secondly, we shall consider the great blessings and advantages brought to us through Mary's glory, and the duties devolving on us therefrom. May God the Holy Ghost who hath so wondrously gifted thee, O blessed Mother, enable us to consider profitably and take to heart this holy mystery. I continue in the name of Jesus and of Mary.

I.

As soon as the Blessed Virgin was raised from the tomb, she was received with triumphant glory in heaven. But who can undertake, with human words,

to describe this triumph? All earthly triumphs, celebrated with the greatest splendor that the world affords, could give but a faint impression of the glories of triumphal rejoicings in heaven. What unbounded pæans of joy, what songs of praise and triumph, and heavenly "allelujas!" must have broken forth. And how the holy Virgin's heart must have responded with throbs of unspeakable joy to this heavenly greeting! But who can ever think of her ecstacy at beholding the glorified form of Jesus, her Divine Son? The King of Heaven in all His splendor, with heavenly hosts and angels surrounding Him, receiving His Virgin Mother into glory! Indeed, it is a picture for heavenly eyes to look upon, and above the reach of our poor vision. St. Thomas of Villanova says: "Her Son came forth to meet her, with His heavenly court; and, amidst rejoicings of angels and acclamations of the heavenly hosts, He, with His own hand, exalted her to a position above the Angelic choirs."

In the Third Book of Kings we read of the great honors with which King Solomon received his mother when she came to make a certain request of him: "The King arose to meet her, and bowed to her, and sat down upon his throne; and a throne was set for the King's mother, and she sat on his right hand" (III. Kings ii. 19).

This is a type from the Old Testament of what Jesus has done for His Mother in heaven. A throne was placed for her near unto His; she was seated thereupon at His right-hand side; He crowned her with the highest glory and power.

This glorious dignity to which the Blessed Virgin was raised, when crowned by Jesus, raised her far above all saints and angels.

What constitutes the glory of the elect of Heaven? Is it not participation in the divine glory and dignity? And this divine glory; is it not of such magnificence and supernatural resplendence that no mortal can look on it and live? When the holy Apostles saw Our Blessed Redeemer on Mt. Tabor, transfigured before their eyes, they fell upon the ground, and dared not again look up. To be enabled to see God we need the heavenly light, the supernatural light of glory by which heavenly things are seen.

The present human vision must be transformed into the heavenly vision, before we can see God or heavenly beings. It is with this new vision that the elect of God behold him face to face, and see Him as He is. "We know," says St. John, "that we shall be like to Him: because we shall see Him as He is" (I. John iii. 2).

Therefore we must first resemble God, in order that we may see Him as He is.

The elect in heaven are wholly resplendent with the glory of the divine presence, and God's wondrous radiance is shed upon them so that they appear deified. For we know that the righteous shall shine as the sun in their Father's kingdom. This glory is not, however, equally shared by all the blessed. It is proportioned to the merits, grace, and dignity attained by each one. As in all virtue the Blessed Virgin excelled all creatures, so now, in heaven, she outranks all saints and angels in splendor and dignity. St. Jerome says: "She sits in heavenly radiance on a throne, and after Jesus occupies the first place in the kingdom of heaven." St. Bernard declares that "she had gained this most exalted place for herself, because Jesus, the Son of God, had found in her a

place for Himself, the holiest and worthiest place in all the world. With Jesus she had shared His shame and sufferings; is it not fitting, then, that she should share His glory?"

In truth, the glory of the Holy Mother can justly be excelled by nothing but the glory of her Divine Son, who is enthroned at the right hand of the Father; and she upon the right hand of her Son.

Mary was crowned also with the highest bliss and happiness. The blessedness of God's elect consists essentially in beholding God Himself; in the full possession and enjoyment of Him, the greatest treasure, the essence and origin of all that is beautiful and good. In God they find all things needed to enchant them, and to satisfy the sanctified human heart with purest joy and bliss. They fully realize the immensity of God's love and His regard for them as favorite and well-beloved children. This infinite goodness and amiability attracts their hearts to God with irresistible force, and transfixes them with unending love for him. As with divine light they behold Him, so with divine love they love Him, with a love that comes from God Himself, and is shared by them with God. Hence, with that same perfect love with which God loves Himself, they too love God; with the same love felt by the Son of God for His heavenly Father, do they also love the Father.

Therefore, the joy of the elect in heaven is a participation in the eternal blessed life of God, in the full enjoyment of the divine nature.

Not all of the elect enjoy this heavenly bliss in equal measure. For as the dignity and the glory are proportioned to the worth, so also is the happiness of the saints measured by their merits. The more

meritorious the life has been on earth, so much the more blessed it shall be in heaven. The more good works done, the more patiently sorrows and afflictions have been borne, the more the life has tended to God's glory and the salvation of fellow-men, so much the greater joys and bliss will be found in heaven. And this bliss is proportioned also to the zeal with which man has striven to know God more perfectly on earth, and love Him more devoutly. Those men who in their earthly lives have cared little or nothing for the knowledge and love of God are unworthy, and indeed incapable, of seeing God and sharing His perfections hereafter. Such souls cannot be saved. Without a living faith in God and sincere love for Him on earth, there is no beholding Him and rejoicing in His presence in heaven. The more earnestly we strive to know Him and His divine truths, so much the more perfect will be our knowledge, and clear our vision, of Him hereafter.

The holy Mother of God has excelled all heavenly beings in merits, grace, and dignity; and, therefore, she hath obtained the clearest vision and fullest knowledge of God; by this her happiness is greater than that of saints and angels, or of cherubim and seraphim.

Lastly, our heavenly Mother is crowned with the highest power. For this power is only measured by the love of Jesus for His Mother. The holy saints, in speaking of this, say that Mary is all-powerful by her intercession, as her divine Son is all-powerful by His nature. St. Peter Damian says: "In thy hands, O holy Virgin, are placed the treasures of the Lord's mercy."

Her power extends over all treasures of grace that

she may bestow them as required. And hereby her Divine Son grants her the greatest honor, and occasions her the very greatest happiness. Should it not justly cause a mother, the most loving mother, to rejoice, at being able to bestow upon her children heavenly blessings in abundant measure?

And this wondrous power of Mary is not confined to matters concerning us on earth alone, but extends over the angels and saints of heaven, whose Queen she is.

These blessed beings obey her gladly, and delight in executing her least command. But this power she uses only for the welfare of her children, for those who venerate her, and by their adoration recommend themselves unto her care, and to the protection of the heavenly host. And thus the exercise of her great power gives honor and the greatest joy to her.

Even to the evil spirits in hell doth her power extend. For she is in very truth the mighty one who should crush the serpent's head and obtain the victory over the infernal dragon. Yes, she has so crushed the serpent's head and conquered him, that not for a moment could she be under his power. And she will continue her conquest over him so long as power is left to Satan upon earth. Again, this power is used by her in favor only of her children; used by the heavenly Queen to defend and protect those who flee to her for aid. And what a refuge and protection is this from Satan's wiles! Hell trembles at the call "Holy Mary."

Thus, then, my brethren, let us picture Mary; adorned with a triple crown of glory, bliss, and power; seated upon her throne beside the throne of Jesus. And when we adore her and call on her, let us remem-

ber still she is our Mother. As heaven's Queen of glory, we owe to her adoration, and as our Mother we owe her filial love and confidence.

We have now, in the second part, to consider the priviliges and the duties which come to us from Mary's exaltation; from her glory, bliss, and power. Ave Maria!

II.

The coronation of the Blessed Virgin as Queen of heaven and earth, and the glorious privileges enjoyed by her, bring to us certain duties and many blessings also.

Jesus and Mary are our spiritual parents; their exaltation, therefore, is the exaltation of our human nature, the elevation of the human race to the highest thrones of heaven. Christ has truly and forever united the divine and human natures in His one Person, and thus He sits at the right hand of the Father, sharing with Him majesty and dominion. Mary is human, and only human, as we ourselves are; but she, by grace and by election, is raised above all other created beings of heaven and earth. As Queen she sits upon her Son's right hand, and in her the whole human race is thus exalted and honored by Almighty God. In Jesus and Mary we may behold the new-born human race exalted to the highest glory, as, by Adam and Eve, they had been abased to the lowest degradation. And this will show to us one great blessing proceeding from the holy Virgin's glory.

Of old the Israelites thus sang of Judith: "Thou art the glory of Jerusalem, thou art the joy of Israel, thou art the honor of our people" (Jud. xv. 10). With

much more reason may Christians thus address the holy Virgin.

Another blessed privilege brought to us by Mary's exaltation is, that we also may hope to receive a heavenly crown. As children of God, with her we are heirs of heaven, co-heirs with Christ, as the holy Apostle tells us. What, then, may we hope for as our inheritance?

Surely nothing else than a participation in that glory and bliss possessed by Jesus and Mary, and eternally enjoyed by them in heaven. The heavenly crown well may be the highest object of the Christian's hope, and rightly do we struggle to obtain it. For we know with certainty we shall possess it, if in our days of pilgrimage on earth we lead a truly Christian life. This hope forever buoys us in life, and raises up our thoughts on high to those heavenly thrones where sit our King and Father, and our Blessed Virgin Mother crowned beside Him. As far as we have resembled Jesus and Mary in virtue and holiness of life, so shall be proportioned our resemblance to them in heavenly bliss and glory.

Again, referring to the power of Mary, it must be remembered that she will exert it ever to procure for us this heavenly crown. She has been termed the "treasurer of grace." And over all the blessings of redemption her sway extends. Yet she has these treasures given to her hands solely that she may bestow them on the faithful. The holy Church thus causes Mary to say: "To me belongeth wealth that I may enrich them that love me."

How steadfast, then, should be our hope, and what comfort for us is there in the thought of Mary's power and glorious good-will. This great and mighty treas-

urer of grace is also our own mother. Her maternal love is greater and more fervent far than any earthly mother's love. No one can realize as well as she the precious value of grace unto the soul. No earthly mother wishes for the welfare of her child, with half the eagerness that Mary longs for our salvation, and longs to bestow on us the blessed graces needed for gaining eternal happiness. Could it be possible, then, for us to have a more excellent intercessor between God, between Jesus our Redeemer, the fountain of all grace, and ourselves? She is the Mother of the Redeemer, hence the Mother of all grace; she is the Mother of the redeemed, hence our Mother.

Moreover, if the power of Mary extends, as it does, over angels and saints, again this power is used only for our good. She charges these heavenly messengers to aid and assist us in our pilgrimage, and makes them bearers of grace and blessings unto us.

Over the evil spirits she exerts her power with wondrous force and efficacy, in defending us from the attacks and wiles of these enemies of God and men.

Her faithful and loving children have nothing at all to fear from the malice of these spirits who wander about seeking to devour the soul. A trustful invocation of the Blessed Virgin drives them away as chaff before the wind.

Accordingly, we can see that the glory, bliss, and power with which Mary is crowned bring boundless advantages to us, as well as great consolations in life and death. But also there are duties laid upon us, which must be well considered and discharged if we would partake of the gracious blessings.

Our first duty is that we should ever rejoice at the

glory and exaltation of our heavenly Queen and Mother. For when she was received into Jerusalem on high, and crowned there by her Divine Son, the heavenly choirs pealed forth glad songs of joy. Surely we must join with them in spirit whenever we think of Mary's mighty exaltation. As loving children rejoice at a fond Mother's happiness, we too must exalt at Mary's bliss and realize her happiness with saints and angels. But, in truth, our own hearts suffice to tell us of this duty.

Then we must offer a sincere and filial reverence to her, consisting in due respect, trustful invocation, and zealous imitation of her virtuous life. Should we not most highly revere the Blessed Virgin, when God Himself has raised her far above all creatures; has honored her by calling her to be the Mother of His Son, by imparting to her the highest graces for her great vocation, and by crowning her in heaven with greatest glory?

If we fail to reverence our Mother for her wondrous blessedness, we do most certainly thereby despise God's gifts and offer disrespect to Him. For the reverence we show to Mary redounds directly to the honor of God Himself. She shall, in truth, be called blessed by all generations of the world, as she herself foretells in the Magnificat, but for the reason, as she further says, "because He that is mighty hath done great things to me." Yes, God has done great things for her, the very greatest His Omnipotence hath ever wrought on earth. Hence, if Almighty God is marvellous in His saints, He is most marvellous in the Queen of saints. Her Son has clothed her with the radiant garment of His own glory; from His own dignity the majesty of Mary is derived. When,

therefore, we praise Mary we praise God. When we glorify Mary we glorify her Divine Son. As St. Bernard says, indeed "there is no doubt that everything we say to Mary's praise belongs directly to her Divine Son, and if we honor the Son we cannot withhold our praise from the Mother." Most rightly, therefore, does the holy Church pay great tribute of love and reverence to the Blessed Virgin—a tribute due to her mysterious eminence and glory. And rightly she demands her children to pay the same reverence and filial love.

Finally, my brethren, in all concerns of body and soul, of time and eternity, we should invoke our heavenly Mother. Is she not our most loving and powerful intercessor with her Divine Son? Does she not ever stand as a mediator between her Son and us, as long as there are men in need of grace, and as long as sin and want and death abound?

As long as her Son's most sacred Body and Blood rests upon our altars, her maternal love shall not cease to implore for us that His Blood shall not have been shed in vain. And as her Son paid heed to her request at Cana's marriage-feast, will He not also hear her loving cry for us at all times?

Let us, then, ever call on her as long as our pilgrimage on earth lasts. Full of zeal and confidence, let us invoke her as "our Mother of Mercy," "Refuge of Sinners," and "Comforter of the Afflicted;" as the surest help of Christians "in life and at the hour of death."

The end and object of our veneration and invocation must be our imitation of her holy life. If our reverence for Mary has not this object, it will in no

way tend to our salvation. Her living faith, her steadfast hope and ardent love, her zeal in work and prayer, her patience, and especially her humility and purity, must we all imitate in our several states of life. And to do this we must ask with confidence for her mighty intercession. In this way shall our devotion to the Blessed Virgin help us to a pious life and holy death.

From what has been said, we trust you will have seen, dear brethren, that the holy Rosary offers us the worthiest means of honoring our heavenly Mother, of paying her the adoration that is due, and of gaining grace and strength to imitate her holy life. Besides all this, remember that this form of devotion has been strongly recommended to the faithful of this age by the Vicar of Christ himself. Therefore, our hope, our prayer, is that you all may use it, and so learn to love it that it may be to each one a help to a holy life, a blessed death, and an everlasting crown in heaven with Jesus and His blessed Mother Mary. Amen.

I.

O blessed Queen of Heaven,
Mother of grace divine,
To thee I recommend myself,
With all that is mine.

II.

And while, devoutly praying,
I twine this flow'ry wreath,
O breathe a blessing back to me
With thy fragrant breath,

III.

As in life's night of darkness
Thy Rosary is given,
Bestow on me, when morning breaks,
A crown in heaven.

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